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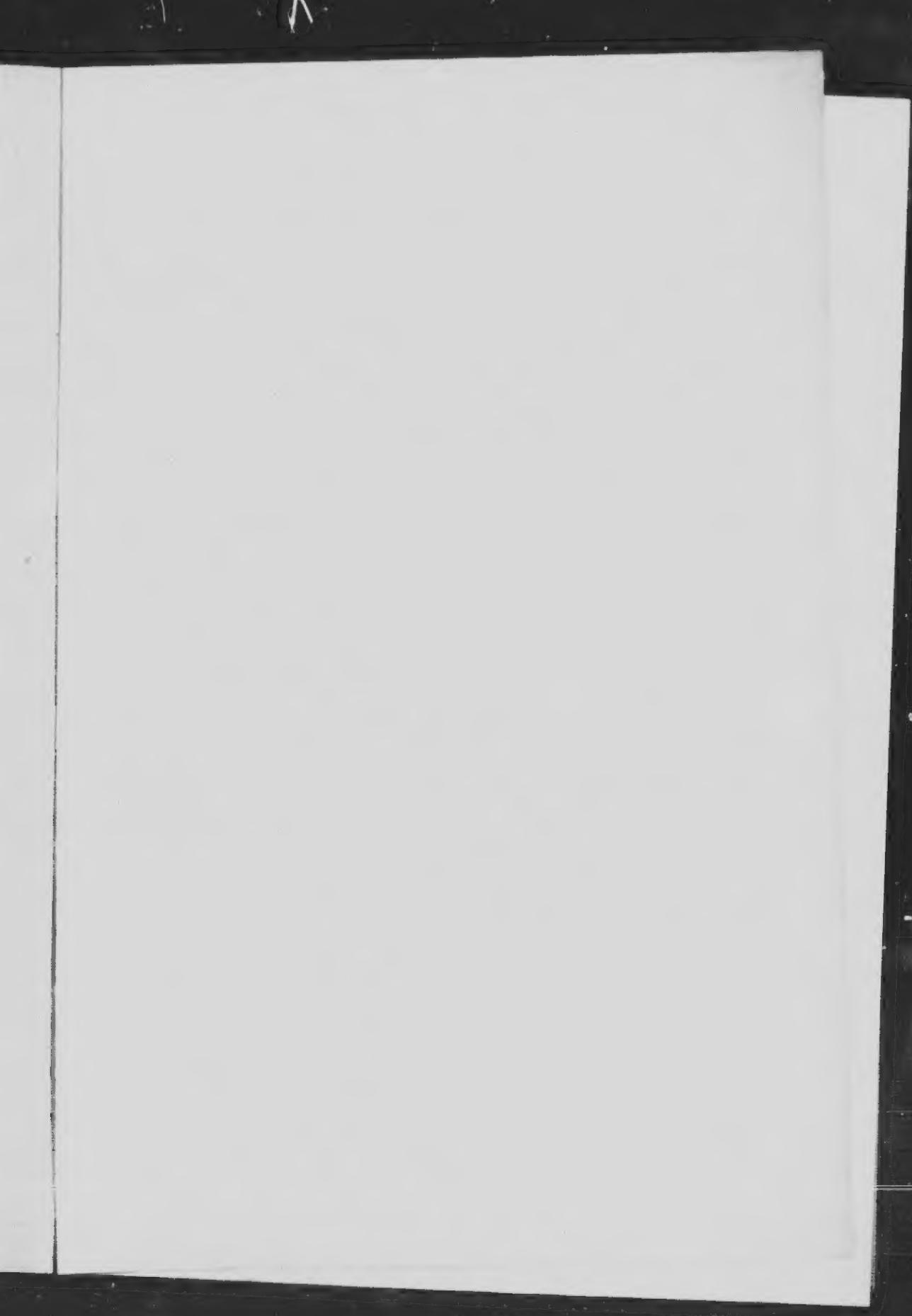
With Compliments of

DEAN HARRIS

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HERE AND THERE IN MEXICO

BY

DEAN HARRIS

Author of "Pioneers of The Cross"; "By Path and Trail"; "Spiritism and Demonology," Etc., Etc.



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This Book
is affectionately dedicated
to
My Life-long Friend,
Reverend H. J. Gibney, P.P.,
Alliston.

"Of all that extensive Empire which one, acknowledged the authority of Spain in the New World, no portion, for interest and importance, can be compared with Mexico—and this equally whether we compare the variety of its soil and climate; the inexhaustible stores of its mineral wealth; its scenery, grand and picturesque beyond example; the character of its ancient inhabitants, not only far surpassing in intelligence that of the North American races, but reminding us, by their monuments, of the primitive civilizations of Egypt and Hindustan; or, lastly, the peculiar circumstances of the Conquest, adventurous and romantic as any legend devised by Norman or Italian bard of chivalry."

"Conquest of Mexico."—*Prescott.*

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PREFATORY NOTE.

The Letters embodied in this book were written when I was travelling through Mexico, studying its traditions and its history, visiting out of the way places, enjoying its superb climate and magnificent scenery and, above all, trying to get in touch with the intimate, every day life of its courteous and friendly people.

For this volume I have selected the letters which deal with some phases of the Cortesian Conquest, the Brendan legends, and features and incidents associated with some of the natural curiosities of the wonderful country.

I have no sympathy with the gruesome mentality of those writers on Mexico who are forever dwelling with what they condescend to term the "horrors of peonism," the "atrocities of the revolutionists," the "superstitions of

Romanism" and the "Corruption of Mexican politicians." Men who live in glass houses ought to have a care against whom they heave their bricks

The mystic history of ancient Mexico surpasses in human interest any country in America, if not in the world. Peopled by an unknown and mysterious race whose origin is lost in the twilight of a past that has no history, the land and its inhabitants offer fascinating material to the student of Archaeology and Anthropology.

With a climate unsurpassed for variety and salubriousness modern Mexico is a land of fascination, of glorious traditions, of unequalled scenery and wonderful natural resources.

Out of the welter of blood and carnage—the brain storms which visit every people sooner or later when rising to a higher plane of evolution—Mexico will emerge redeemed and disenthralled.

This is what her friends hope and pray for and, if their hopes and prayers fail, then there is nothing left for Mexico but despair.

L. I.
THE VALLEY AND CITY OF MEXICO.

My Dear Henry,—

In obedience to the promise I made to you, when leaving home, I begin this morning the first of a series of letters I propose writing while travelling through this ancient and mysterious land. The guide books and railroad folders have made you familiar with the towns and cities on the line of travel, from El Paso, so, in this letter I'll carry you through a territory with which you are not acquainted.

Passing through a gorge of the Otumba mountains, the descent to the Valley of the Mexican plateau begins. At once, one's artistic appreciation of the beautiful in nature is deepened by the wonderful perspectives which open in harmony with the sublime panorama. At last we cross the rim of the valley and are now passing Ayotta, a little village reposing

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in covetted obscurity on the marshy fringe of Lake Chalco, fifteen miles from the historic City of Mexico. The road is an elevation of the ancient causeway constructed in pre-Spanish times through a shallow lake, now emptied by evaporation. A repellent desert of black sand, saline pools and crustacean remains alone exist, sole witnesses of the waters which in early times covered the land. The approach to the city of Montezuma impresses the visitor from abroad with a feeling of depression, if not of melancholy and sadness.

All is silence and desolation, like that which broods over the ruins of the ancient and luxurious City of Palmyra. As we advance we gaze upon small fields of the maguey plant, half-wild cattle and, here and there, an Indian hut enclosed by a hedge of nopal cactus. Skirting a rocky elevation—the Penon-siejo—which at one time was washed by the salt waters of the vanished lake we entered an aldea, a cluster of cabins, called the Penon de los Banos—Hill of the Baths—famous for its sulphur and chala waters. I returned to this singular volcanic formation a few days ago in order to examine minutely the structure of the rock. Workmen, when opening a quarry here, six

months ago, uncovered the remains of an ancient town destroyed, long before the conquest, by volcanic eruption. When I revisited Penon the pit was strewn with broken pottery, pieces of ollas (water jars), fragments of flint arrowheads and spear tips of obsidian (volcanic glass).

In the National Museum of Mexico City are three skeletons dug out of this quarry. They were found embedded in broken lava, incandescent sand and tufa. In their Museum cases these skeletons repose in their winding sheets of volcanic weaving and to a thoughtful visitor to the "Hall of the Dead" suggest melancholy reflections of the horrible agony which companioned their awful doom.

Nearing the city of Mexico, we pass through the old Garita de San Lazaro (gate of St. Lazarus) near which stood in other days the leper hospital, where the unhappy victims of this horrible oriental disease, leprosy, were sheltered and cared for by consecrated members of a religious community.

In many ways Mexico is unlike any city in the world. Its superb climate, its gorgeously flowering parks, alemeda and gardens, its magnificent churches and palaces, the National Museum and wonderful Opera House,

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the great Cathedral, the picturesque brown races—offspring of Spaniards and Indians,—the quaint and singular dress of the peons, the dwarfed and tawny complexioned Indians met on the streets, and who appear and disappear like apparitions, but above all its weird past and melancholy history place the City of Mexico in a class by itself and outside the circle of comparison with any other metropolis of the world.

Some other time I may linger over the origin and intimate life of the city in pre-Spanish times, but this morning I will deal only with the Mexico of the Spaniards before the Mexicans declared for independence and fought their way to a republic. The guide books of Barnet, Hart and Campbell and that very complete work "The Mexican Guide" by Thomas A. Janvier, furnish ample information on the unrivalled City of today and are all within reach of the public hand. To dwell here on the Mexico City of our own time or to describe its outward life would be inflicting upon you a repetition of what may be read in any of these guide or hand-books to modern Mexico.

I may only say that, as most of the great buildings, all the churches, the Cathedral, the

Sagrario and indeed the city proper were raised by the Spaniards, the early past and the present must necessarily fuse into each other, so that any description of the material city of the Spaniards must cover largely the Mexico of today.

The streets and avenues of the City of the Montezumas, their regularity and cleanliness, the severe but imposing architecture of the public buildings and private residences; the cupolas, facades and lofty towers of the churches; the tropical wealth of the city's patios and of the Alemeda or Central Park, leave upon the mind a singularly pleasing impression after the melancholy influence produced by the nakedness and barren desolation of the approach to the city. What, in a special manner, strikes the visiting stranger is the unexpected length of many of the streets which intersect at right angles, or form diamond crossings, and disclose at each opening an admirable view of the mountains which enclose the Valley of Tenochtitlan.

The great central square, the Plaza Mayor, or Zocalo, as it is now called, is unlike anything of its kind in North America. When in 1522 the Aztec temple of human sacrifice was destroyed by Cortes and a Spanish city plan-

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ned, an open space was laid out to form a park in front of a Christian Church to be raised on the site of the sacrificial temple of the Aztecs. This park was and is to this day the heart of the city—an oblong square made beautiful by tropic trees, a flowing fountain and beds of fairest flowers—and upon which nine of the eighty streets of the city focus, all the street-car lines converge and citizens, visitors and vendors of fruit and iced drinks gather at all hours of the day and early night.

The great cathedral—the Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico—overlooks the Zocalo from the north. The ancient palace of the Spanish Viceroy—now the Parliament Buildings—with a frontage of nearly seven hundred feet fills the Eastern side of the Zocalo, and many fine buildings, including the famous “Monts de Piedad” or National pawn shop, and the Portales border on the great square to the West and South.

Naturally the first building to which the educated stranger turns when he enters Mexico City is its great Cathedral. As the visitor to Rome, long before he enters the imperial city, sees from afar the dome of St. Peter's apparently floating on an atmospheric sea, so the traveler entering the valley of Mexico beholds the

royal dome and the prodigious towers of this magnificent monument.

The Cathedral—famous under the viceroys for its interior decorations, its wealth of fifteenth century paintings, its solid silver sanctuary railings and precious marbles, still retains and merits its architecturally unrivalled reputation. It is a vast and imposing structure five hundred feet long, falling away from two very high and strikingly effective towers and a facade of wonderful design. This great monument is elevated some feet above the level of the Plaza Mayor. Its foundations rest on the stones and grinning idols of the Aztec temple of sacrifice—the Teocalli—dedicated to the god of war before whose statue sixty five of Cortes' men were immolated, their palpitating and smoking hearts torn out and offered to the god the morning after Cortes and Alverado saved their men from annihilation on the awful "Noche Triste—the Night of Sorrow."

The pagan temple with its dependencies filled a much larger space than does the Cathedral. An early manuscript known to archaeologists as the "Chimal-popoca" and written in the language of the Anuahacs, says that the foundations of the Cathedral rest on a forest

of cedar logs held together by iron chains and that to strengthen the foundations the buttresses of the sacred building rest on heaps of broken statues of heathen divinities.

The impression left upon the mind on immediately entering the great church is a sensation of gloom and coldness, for the choir of the Canons hides the entire perspective to those passing in by the main door. But, by degrees the beauty and immensity of this divine creation in stone grow upon you and you begin to experience the sublime sensations of Byron when he stood under the dome of St. Peter's, for here:

".....Majesty,
Power, glory, strength and beauty all are
aisled

In this eternal ark of worship undefiled."

Bayard Taylor could not restrain his meed of admiration for this noble work of human genius and for the generosity of the men that enabled the artists to achieve it. "Nothing in America," he writes, "is comparable to this great temple of modern Mexico, the most beautiful, vast and bold of all sacred or profane buildings of our Continent. If the Roman Church had done nothing in North America but construct this wonderful edifice she would

have placed a continent under obligations to her." This great temple enshrining the remains of saints and sinners antedates the beginnings of nearly all the religions and religious cults of America. It has outlived the hopes and aspirations of ambitious men and seems destined to witness the decay and burial of Mexico as an independent nation.



L II.

CHILAPA

Buried in isolation by the foothills of the Sierras Madres, in the State of Guerrero, the inland town of Chilapa has for many centuries, lived its own life in its own way and passed its uneventful years in drowsy solitude. It is one hundred and twenty-five miles south by west of Mexico City and its picturesque population of 8,300 souls seems never to increase or diminish. It is one of the oldest places colonised by the early Spaniards and is thirty miles away from the nearest railroad.

The site was included in the grant of Emperor Charles V to the Marques de Valle of Oaxaco (To Cortes, Conqueror of Mexico) and a settlement was made here before 1620. Then Chilapa was made a town and a few years later it was raised to the rank of a city. The first Church, a frame building erected for the Spanish Colonists and the converted members

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of the Chichimic tribe, was replaced in 1659 by a substantial structure which was destroyed by the earthquake of 1798. The splendid Cathedral completed in 1843, and seriously damaged by the last earthquake is a solidly constructed and an imposing building.

When on the morning of March 26, news reached Mexico City that Chilapa and Chilpancingo were destroyed by a great earthquake and many lives lost a wave of sadness and pity passed through the National Capital.

That afternoon, accompanied by three Mexican gentlemen I boarded the Sierra Madre and Pacific train for Tixtla. Here we took burros, crossed the Huajuapan Mountains and descending, came in sight of the devastated city. As we drew near, we could see the smoke ascending from the burning houses, and met fugitives on their way to Chilpancingo and Tixtla. When we approached the suburbs we rode into groups of men, women and children, camped in the open and showing signs of a night of suffering from cold and terror. There was no order, everything and everybody were in confusion, and no one, apparently, knew what to do or where to go. When we entered the city the devastation was appalling. Members of the City Guard were

patrolling the streets; they were forced to search for temporary quarters as their barracks were destroyed when the Mayoralty buildings fell.

There were only a few frame structures in the city, and as many of the sun baked houses of the poor had floors of "rammed earth" the fire which followed the earthquake was under control when we arrived.

Two hours after we entered the city a company of Rurales (mounted police) rode in from Ometepec and at once organized the citizens into companies, and began the demolition of dangerous walls and the removal of debris.

Never until then did I appreciate the worth and efficiency of military training and military efficiency. I am satisfied that in three days, under the command and supervision of the Rurales, order will be completely restored and the city, so far as circumstances will permit, assume its wonted life.

And now let me record some of the portents which heralded the coming of the calamity and a few of the incidents associated with it.

On the morning of March 26th at 7.30 a very severe earthquake, accompanied by sub-

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terranean sounds, rocked the city. The phenomenon was so marked that it seemed as if the great terrageneous mass was about to pass from under the peoples' feet and, for a moment, the falling in of every roof was expected. In four minutes the trembling occurred again with ominous violence while strange and mysterious noises beneath the earth carried terror to the hearts of the people. Fear and expectation of death were contagious and even strong men trembled in the presence of their approaching doom. The great plaza, the city park and open spaces, which promised security from buildings threatening to fall, were filled by young and old beside themselves with terror and panic.

A few minutes before the great shock, we were told, the sky turned a dark red, the air became hot and suffocating and the intensity of the silence awesome and oppressive. Then the weird noises under the people's feet deepened in volume, the sun swung blood red in a murky sky and, over the Sieras, oscillated dark and portentous clouds.

The animals seemed to have had an intimation of danger hours before the city was struck. Cattle bunched together and bellowed in the field, domestic fowl ran aimlessly from

place to place and in their own way showed the fear which controlled them. Howling dogs crouched at the feet of strangers or with drooping tails followed their owners from place to place searching their eyes for some explanation or encouragement. Then when the first blow struck the city the horses and burros turned back their ears, brayed and whinnied; fowls roosted high, and the cattle lying down sprang to their feet terrified, bunched close and stood as if preparing for wolves. Then was heard again the subterranean rumbling, a hoarse, muffled growling and—the catastrophe entered.

The earth swung, as swings a giant pendulum, from the northeast to the southwest, then rapidly oscillated from west to east; the earth was alive and wounded by some awful electric stroke. Amid a terrific hurricane of wind buildings came crashing down, one of the Cathedral towers leaned to the west, ringing the great bells, then all was confusion.

"I happened," said a merchant to me, "to be on the edge of the town just before the coming of the great shock and hurrying towards my home. The swaying of the earth threw me down twice; a fearsome noise filled the air, occasioned by the crash of falling houses, the

bellowing of cattle and the cries of women and children. I ran as fast as I could to where my house stood, meeting with terrified men, women and children, wildly gesticulating, crying out 'ruina, ruina, the end of the world, God have mercy on us.'

"My heart sank within me as I rushed forward with the hope of seeing my family, for, to add to the horrors of my surroundings, the groans and cries of many fallen led me to fear that each heap of ruins might be a sepulchre. Arrived at the place where my house was I found but a great heap of rubbish. I called lustily to ascertain if there was any one alive in the ruin but no one answered me. I then ran on to another part of the town and learned that my wife and family were safe with a friend."

In the annals of its humble history there is no record telling that Chilapa had ever passed through as severe and trying experience. Fortunately few lives were lost. The fire threatened at one time to burn up the whole city, but by heroic efforts on the part of the citizens, it was luckily extinguished after six hours of fighting. Conspicuous among the fire-fighters was the bishop and his clergy who

are now moving among the homeless, carrying consolation, comfort and food to the poor people squatting in the plaza and in fields outside the city.

On the Calle del Pradito, the main street of Chilapa, there is an opening or fissure, six inches wide produced by the earthquake; it is now slowly closing, but is squeezing out a bluish grey mud quite hot to the touch. The night before the earthquake shook the city a sustained silence, uncanny in its weird intensity and prolongation settled down upon Chilapa and the land around it.

Another strange thing happened. The Rio del Sabine, a little river flowing through the town on its way to the Pacific, stood still an hour before the first shock and, between the first and second strikes, flowed back as if affrighted.

The great tower on the right of the Cathedral is a ruin and the walls of the splendid fane are badly damaged. The Cathedral is built on the South side of the Plaza de San Rafael and is approached by a stone terrace. Upon this terrace and in front of the sacred building stands on a granite platform a life-sized marble statue of Pius IX, the gift of the Sociedad

Catolica. Elevated upon the terrace the Cathedral rises to a magnificent height and towers above the neighboring buildings and, indeed, over the city itself. On the west front rise two lofty towers and between these is the main entrance, surmounted by a stone arch and basso-relievos in white marble. Over the main entrance is cut the date when the Church was built, the Arms of the Republic, and, in a niche, stands a statue of St. Peter. Over the door to the right is a carving representing St. Francis receiving the Stigmata or the Marks of the Five Wounds; and over the entrance to the left a basso-relievo of Santa Rosa presenting a crown of flowers to the Divine Babe reposing in the Virgin Mother's Arms.

The building is of massive construction, with heavy buttresses, the whole of a dark blue stone resembling blue basalt. The interior of the Cathedral is almost severe in its simplicity. The aisles are divided from the nave or body of the Church by twenty fluted pillars which support the delicate and beautifully vaulted roof. The central arches form a Latin Cross on which rises a fine dome. Within the dome are paintings in tempora (a white mixture like calsomine) representing the As-

sumption of the Blessed Virgin with groups of the principal characters of Sacred History. On each side of the aisles are rows of chapels of Saracen design in purest marble. The High Altar, erected in 1849 after designs by Lorenzo Hidalgo is raised upon a platform of four steps, is of variegated marble of sheen polish, and so effectually is the harmony of color followed in the placement of the panels that at a distance the marbles seem to fade into and embrace each other. The sanctuary is enclosed by a handsome railing of tumbago (a composite metal of gold, silver and copper) cast in Seville.

Like many of the cities of Central America, Chilapa is within what is known as the "seismic zone" and is subject to periodic tremblings, but not since 1798 has the city experienced such a violent visitation as the earthquake of March 26th.

L III.

REVENGE OF A BANDIT'S MISTRESS

While in Chilapa I was told that for many years during the unsettled condition of Mexico after the expulsion of the Spaniards and the Declaration of Independence in 1829, the romantic little city earned an unenviable notoriety for its sympathy with and the help it gave to guerrilla chiefs and mountain bandits who in those eruptive times ambushed the highways and passes leading to Mexico City and to Acapulco on the Pacific.

For fifty years after its Declaration of Independence, Mexico was a seething cauldron of political fermentation and civil strife. Like the Hell of the Patriarch Job: "Ubi Nullus ordo sed sempiternus horror regnat—where there is no order but eternal horror reigns," Mexico was abandoned to riots, uprisings, revolutions and internecine wars, and its people were threatened with the loss of their civilization.

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The roads and trails from Acapulco to Mexico City, from Vera Cruz, from El Paso del Norte, from the Atlantic and the Pacific were infested with cut-throats, bandits and highwaymen, organized into companies under daring and ferocious leaders. From the mountains and inaccessible retreats of the forests these outlaws swept down upon the diligencias or stage coaches, rifled the mails and robbed the passengers and if any fool, or reckless man among them showed fight, he was, at once, shot down or knifed.

COMING OF THE RURALES

When, in 1876, General Porfirio Diaz fought his way to the Presidency of Mexico and was, on May 6th, proclaimed by Congress Chief of the Republic, he at once began the rehabilitation of his country and the restoration of law and order. Come what might, he resolved to suppress banditry and, if necessary, annihilate the outlaws. After raising the pay of his officers and soldiers, he increased his infantry and cavalry and began to garrison the mountain towns and villages. Then he despatched messengers into the forests and mountains

inviting the chiefs of the bandits to meet him at Oaxaca, promising them immunity for all past offences. He threatened that unless they met him half-way in his efforts to pacify the land—his country and theirs—he would open upon them a war of extermination. Diaz had a dash of Indian blood in him, and as the captains of the outlaws were all half-castes or three quarters bred, they trusted him and came to Oaxaca.

When the meeting was called to order the President, with consummate address, submitted a proposition to the robber chiefs. He pledged his word that he would organize them, and those of their men who would follow them, into a battalion of mounted police to be known under the distinctive title of "Rurales." The officers—captains, lieutenants and non-commissioned officers—all but the Colonel, might be nominated by themselves.

Their mounts would be picked from the best herds in Mexico, their uniforms would be of leather buff and their hats of Andalusian felt. Their pay would be two centavos higher than that of the regular army and, over the past, a shroud would be dropped.

"I have your blood flowing in my veins," said Porfirio Diaz, "I know that desperation,

poverty and the awful past drove you to where you are and what you are. I am your friend, but we must have peace and security; travel through our country must be safe; we owe it to ourselves, to our beloved Mexico. I make no threats, but—well, you know me. If you accept my terms, you must swear to me to make relentless war on outlaws, murderers and fugitives from justice. You will pledge yourselves to protect our own people and strangers passing through the Republic, and to pursue, night and day, as our spotted leopard does its prey, all murderers and highway robbers."

The President won the bandits to his side and in six months the battalion of Mounted Police was organized. The sons and grand sons of these desperate men are the "Rurales" of today, and when on May 5th, every year, a great military parade passes through Mexico City to commemorate the storming of Puebla, these Rurales in their picturesque uniforms are the most spectacular feature of the great review and procession.

Among the four leaders of the bandits who refused to meet Diaz at Oaxaca, perhaps the most conspicuous and notorious was Pablo Ocampo. Ocampo, with his band of sixty or

seventy cutthroats levied toll on all travelers to or from Acapulco. He was charged with the commission of many cold-blooded murders, deeds of violence, and an audacity in his raids bordering on the incredible. He was as familiar with the canyons, barrancas and dark recesses of the Southern Sierras as the coyote and jaguar with their prowling grounds.

When, at the head of his gang of murderous marauders, he entered Chilapa a public Holiday was proclaimed and a right royal reception given to himself and his men. He was on good terms with the citizens and, after he and his merry men passed a day or two in feasting and carousing, they returned to their mountain lairs leaving Chilapa richer by hundreds of dollars.

After the Rurales were organized and drilled two companies were marched to Chilapa with orders to stamp out brigandage in the Southern Sierras. Aveturo Padro, a former notorious bandit chief of Queretaro, was in command of the Rurales and, soon after quartering his men, he dispatched a prominent citizen of Chilapa with a message to Pablo Ocampo. Padro advised Ocampo and his followers to come in and surrender, promising them immunity for the past. Ocampo received

the messenger, whom he knew well, with cordiality but advised him to return and inform Aveturo Padro that he preferred to live his own life in his own way.

For six months the Rurales trailed Ocampo and his band over the Southern Sierras, engaged them in skirmishes and running fights, but could never capture them. The government offered three thousand dollars for the head of Ocampo but he seemed to enjoy a charmed life.

After repeated engagements with the Rurales, the followers of Ocampo were noticeably reduced in numbers, yet the robber chief remained unmoved and defiant, continued his robberies and laughed at Prado and his men.

Living with him as a wife and sharing his fortunes was a young girl of twenty-three years a native Chihuahuanese, who was greatly attached to him and accompanied him on many of his raids. Those who remember her say she was a handsome brunette, of dark olive complexion and eyes luminous and innocent as those of the Sierra fawn. She was a crack shot with rifle and pistol, and at fifty or a hundred paces unerringly killed her quarry. Every evening when the band made camp, Ocampo took charge of her rifle and revolver.

threw up a temporary shelter outside the camp and, with Benita, slept on the skins of wolves and bears he had killed, always regretting that animals were not Rurales.

One morning the young Chihuahuanese became a mother. The female companion of a bandit was not supposed to yield to maternal weakness. The accident of a birth detained the band five hours and, as they feared pursuit by the Rurales, the young girl with her babe mounted her horse and held the pace set by the leader. The feeble cries of the new born babe irritated Ocampo.

"The child will lead to our capture," he ispered. Snatching the newly born babe from the breast of its mother, he seized it by the foot and, dashing its head against a rock, flung the mutilated child into a ravine.

Benita witnessed the awful act with, apparently calm composure; she uttered no cry, shed no tears and, when the brigand band continued its march she followed in silence. All that day Benita Lagardo spoke not a word to Pablo Ocampo and, when night fell she lay by his side, answering him in monosyllables by "yes" or "no."

That night when Pablo and his band were buried in deep sleep, the Chihuahuanese raised

herself, gently, quietly, to a sitting position, detached from her girdle a large hunting knife which she always carried, looked upon the face of Pablo, her lover: one hand she fastened stealthily, but firmly in his long, bushy hair and with the other hand cut his throat from ear to ear. Then she separated the head from the neck, wrapped it in her silk rebozo, mounted her horse and stole away. Ocampo would never awake to murder again.

Not the slightest noise betrayed the secret of her maternal vengeance. Carrying her ghastly bundle, she made a detour of some miles lest she might arouse the sentinels sleeping by the worn path. All that night she rode through the woods, entered miniature canyons waded in streams, but never dismounted. She feared pursuit and hid her trail.

The following morning, at about seven o'clock a company of Rurales halted at the foot-hills of the Sierras for breakfast. The lieutenant was taking his chocolate and rolls in an improvised tent, when his sentinel announced the approach of a mounted man from the direction of La Cuz. The officer finished his chocolate and came out. Benita rode into the camp and, to the surprise of the Lieutenant, the cabellero was a young girl carrying a brace of

pistols at her belt and a long knife the naked blade of which was ominously visible.

Hanging from the pommel of her saddle the Lieutenant saw a peculiar appearing bundle, wet and reddish. When she had steadied her mount she looked into the eyes of the officer and spoke: "Buenas dias capitan; I understand your government offers 3,000 pesos for the head of Pablo Ocampo." The lieutenant confirmed the proclamation.

He aquin! El testa del Pablo Ocampo e yo miemo er su marceba—Behold the head of Pablo Ocampo, and I was his mistress." Untieing the gory head from the reboso, Benita threw it at the officer's feet. The dismembered head was brought to Chilapa and recognized by those who knew Ocampo intimately. There is an air of romance around the finale of this gruesome history. A sargeant of the Rurale company enamored of the beauty of Benita made a proposal of marriage to the Chihuahuanese brunette which was favorably received. The Bandit's mistress became the wife of the Rurale sargeant. With the death of Ocampo brigandage disappeared from the Sierra Madre del Sur.



L IV.

CORTES AND THE VALLEY OF MEXICO

I am now about to enter upon some interesting and surprising details intimately associated with the plunge of the daring Spaniard into this mysterious land. On my return to this City from Chilapa I passed many delightful hours in the Mexican National Library burrowing, tunneling into and dusting the cobwebs from many early Spanish records and archives in which this National depositary of information is so rich.

When on the morning of November 3, 1519, the Spanish General, Hernando Cortes came to the range of mountains separating the table lands of Mexico from those of Puebla, he was fifty miles from the City of Mexico. When coming here three months ago I left the Mexican Central train at Otumba, where on July 8, 1520, Cortes fought his historic battle on his retreat from Mexico City after the

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disastrous "Noche Trieste—or Night of Sorrow."

To cross the range, the daring adventurer with his fighters followed the defile between two of the loftiest mountains on the North American Continent. These mountains retain today the same names which were given them before the Spanish Conquest. To his right towered in imperial strength and grandeur Popocatepetl (17,782 alt) the "Hill that Smokes," and on his left Ixtaccihuatl (16,060 Alt), the "White Woman", so called by some one dead a thousand years, from the shining robe of snow falling from the head and shoulders of this woman of great age and wondrous beauty.

The "Hill that Smokes" is 2,000 feet higher than the famous Mont Blanc, and into one of its two craters, 1,000 feet deep, the fearless Spaniard, Montaro, in 1521, descended in a basket and brought out sulphur when the powder of the army was running low. Turning an angle of the pass the adventurous Spaniards caught their first glimpse of the wonderful valley of Mexico. As they advanced the valley unfolded till they came to Amecameca where they halted to gaze upon the transcendent vision. Before them in the

distance and high in air rose the great sacrificial temple. Like an Indian Empress with her coronal of pearls, the pagan city with its white towers and sacrificial pyramids reposed to all seeming on the bosom of the waters. The Spaniards beheld afar off the "pearl of great price" the Venice of the Aztecs for which they fought and of which they dreamed.

In the Borghese Gallery of Art, Rome, there is a magnificent and highly treasured painting. It is labelled "Hanibal and the Promised Land." The great Carthaginian general, according to Livy, reached the summit of the Alps with his army by detours and over snows and ice that wore down his men. When despair was gnawing at their endurance and courage, the Nubian horsemen rode up the incline and halted their horses on the crest. Hanibal was in their front, and calling his officers around him, the Carthaginian with outstretched arm pointed to the plains of Italy. He then with a sweep of his hand drew a line around Lombardy through which the river Po, born of the Alps, was flowing. "Let us now," he exclaimed, "make known to our brave soldiers that, having scaled these mountains, we have broken through the impregnable walls of Italy and those of Rome. The march from now on

will be down to the plains and of easy accomplishment."

Between the pose and ambition of Hanibal beholding Italy for the first time and the gratification and supreme joy of Cortes surveying with his officers the valley of Mexico, there is a striking analogy.

Marching over the southern lands of Lake Chalco, the Spaniards moved through woods and groves ripe with autumnal fruits of rich and tempting hue, and through cultivated fields of yellow maize, irrigated by canals opening from neighbouring lakes. Cortes with his mailed fighters now entered upon a narrow causeway built straight through the shallow lake. After crossing the isthmus dividing Lakes Chalco and Tezcoco they entered upon an imperial reservation entrusted to the care of Montezuma's brother. This was the land of Iztapalapan, and the superior architecture of the buildings evoked the admiration of Cortes and his officers.

Much to their surprise, the fields were arranged in squares, were stocked with fruit trees and planted in flower-bearing shrubs of Mexican and tropical flora. Here also was a huge reservoir, 1,600 yards in circumference in which fish brought from the Atlantic and

Pacific Oceans were swimming. In another quarter was a great aviary or bird cage in which were confined many species of birds more remarkable for brilliancy of plumage than sweetness of song.

Cortes camped in Istapalapan for the night intending to enter Mexico City (Tenochtitlan) the next day. While the adventurous and daring Spaniard with his men are resting in preparation for the morrow, let us briefly review a portion of the early history of the wonderful land.

The ruins of ancient cities, temples and massive buildings, and the valuable and interesting records collected by the French Archaeologist, M. Aubin, who translated the "Codex Chimalpopoca" would seem to prove conclusively that many of the states, included today in the Republic of Mexico, were peopled and partially civilized many centuries before the Christian era. The manners, customs and tribal languages presented a striking resemblance to those of a maritime race which in pre-Roman times peopled the basin of the Mediterranean.

In early days, and of these days we have no written records, Anahuac, now known as Mexico, was settled by a race of pyramid

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builders, sun worshippers and spiritists. Tradition has not handed down to us their name or their origin. What is left of the annals of Anahuac record that about 648 A. D. an invading army, probably from the south, conquered the tribes and settled in the land. These were the Toltecs who built Tula, fifty miles from the present City of Mexico.

The partially preserved ruins of the "Casa Grande—the Great House" with its thirty rooms and the building known as the "puebla" of uncut stone, coated with a cement of reddish tint, are practically all that remain of the Olmec City of Tula. It was in this city that Quetzalcoatl, the "White God" first appeared and taught the people a more improved system of cultivation, a higher style of architecture and the rudiments of a better religion. The early Spanish missionaries were of the opinion that the White God was St. Thomas who disappeared from Jerusalem and never returned.

After many years and tribal wars the theocratic races of Nachan or Palenque united with the Olmecs consolidating into one Empire Anahuac and Yucatan and establishing the seat of Government at Chiapas.

As I hope before leaving this mysterious land of an unknown past to deal with the

worship of the Serpent and the universality of Serpent cult in early times, I may only remark, in passing, that Quetzalcoatl means Serpent of Quetzali, the dwelling place of the Quetzal, a bird of wondrous beauty, still to be found in the forests of Honduras, and that Nachan, in the Tzendale or Yucatan language has the same meaning as Culhuacan in the Aztec or early Mexican "gue and that is "City of the Serpent."

After these explanatory notes I now hurry on to unfold for you the singular origin of the city into which the Spaniards are soon to make their triumphant entry.

Over the main entrance to the great cathedral—the Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico—there is fastened an escutcheon, the national shield of the Republic, painted in triple colors of green, white and red. This national emblem carries a nopal cactus springing from a rough, uneven rock which rises out of a waste of waters. On the nopal a bald headed eagle is perched with outstretched wings drying in the sun and holding in his beak a writhing snake. This symbol on the escutcheon records the discovery of the site of the ancient City of Mexico or Tenochtitlan as it was called in memory of its miraculous origin. Tradition records that

early in the twelfth century a wandering tribe from the distant regions of the north fought their way to the frontiers of Anahuac or the valley of Mexico then sparsely occupied by scattered bands of half savage hunters and fishers.

This wandering tribe, whose primitive name has disappeared from Mexican tradition, after drifting from mountain to hill and from hill to valley, halted one afternoon on the south western rim of one of the small lakes of the great basin. They were, day after day, seeking for a sign foretold by a venerable patriarch long before the tribe left its northern home. Hardly had they thrown up their Xacals or rude huts when the sign appeared—an eagle perched on a cactus which grew out of a crevise of a rock washed by the waves, a royal bird of extraordinary size and majesty with a serpent hanging from its beak. The leaders met in council, then the shaman or priest stripped and dove into the waters to consult with the god of the lake. Returning he told them that they had seen the sign foretold by the patriarch and that here they were to settle and build their city.

The next day they began hewing down the trees which grew around them; then they

made piles and drove them into the marshy land or salt shallows, and on these piles they built their Xacals or huts of reeds and rushes.

As they could raise no corn or vegetables on the salt, marsh lands, they made chinampas or floating gardens, and from the vegetables grown on these artificial patches of land, from the fish caught in the lake and the wild fowl of the marshes, they sustained a precarious existence. We now, for the first time, learn they called themselves Mexicas. The same annals which record their name tell us that before they began to build their wretched huts, on the receding shores of Lake Texcoco, they dwelt for a time at Guadalupe from which place they were driven by a tribe of Chichimecas (meat eaters) to Chapultepec or "Hill of the Grasshopper." Here they made a successful stand against their enemies and, growing in strength and numbers, were moving against their foes when they saw the "sign."

They called their scaffold village Tenoch-tillan, "the place foretold," and when it grew and became a city, it was sometimes known as Mexico or the City of Mexitle the name of their war god.

L V.

CORTES AND THE AZTEC CITY ENTRY OF CORTES

On the morning of November 8, 1519, Cortes dressed his men for the parade and entrance to the Aztec capital. The little army set out from Iztapalapan as the sun was rising over the Sierras, Pedro Alvarado plumed, mounted and caparisoned leading the advance. They entered upon the causeway known as the "Road of the Leopard" which lay across the salt and shallow waters of Lake Tezcoco, and was wide enough for ten horses to move shoulder to shoulder. The lake on both sides of the marine road swarmed with canoes, decorated with flowers and filled with tawney complexioned men, women and children, strangely costumed, silent, serious looking and with piercing eyes which struggled in vain to conceal the burning curiosity which consumed them.

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As the Spaniards advanced, the city loomed large before them. A mile from the gate of the capital the troops came to the battlemented entrance of the great stone wall, strengthened with defensive towers twelve feet high. Here they halted and Cortes, helmeted and mailed, rode to the front. A deputation of Aztec nobles now approached and, saluting the Spanish chief, informed him that Montezuma was on his way to greet him. The Spanish troops with Cortes at their head marched forward and soon beheld the glittering retinue of the Aztec Emperor emerging from the main street which opened a way through the heart of the city.

Bernal Diaz de Castillo, brave soldier, rugged chronicler and rough rider with the army of Cortes tells us in his "History of the Conquest" that "Surrounded by a body of Indian nobles and preceded by three officers of state bearing golden wands Montezuma, Emperor of Mexico, seated in a royal palanquin of burnished gold, came out to meet our general. Over the palanquin, which was carried on the shoulders of nobles, was a canopy of gaudy featherwork covered with jewels and silver filigree and supported by four attend-

ants of princely rank. The palanquin in which the Aztec sat blazed with burnished gold."

When the royal cortege arrived in sight of the Spaniards, the train halted, Montezuma alighted and walked forward to greet the Spanish chief, supported on his right and left by his tributary vassals, the lords of Tezcoco and Iztapalapan. Cortes, dismounting, advanced to meet Montezuma, who received him with gracious courtesy. After an exchange of gifts and good wishes, Montezuma, commanding Cortes to the care of the Lord of Iztapalpan, was borne back to his palace through dense crowds who bent low in reverence as the royal palanquin passed through them.

Cortes now ordered Coral, his trumpeter, to sound the advance, and with colors flying, horses prancing and music playing the Spaniards proudly marched. As they advanced, motley throngs of wondering people came out to feast their eyes upon them. In vain their Indian stoicism struggled with the fierce curiosity which devoured them. "Were these strangers gods," they asked, "and was this commander clothed and bonneted with unknown covering the long expected 'White God' Quetzalcoatl, who when leaving their fathers in his skin boat, long, long ago, promised to come back to

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them again?" Surely ,he bore himself as one divine ; and as he and his attendant demons rode through them, they bowed down, half in fear and half in adoration of these unknown beings, part men and part animals, the like of which they had never seen, never heard of. They gazed with awe and wonder on the horses, on the bright swords and steel helmets, on the marching men whose steps were elastic with military pride and whose feet rose and fell as if but one will governed them all.

They listened with confused emotions of pleasure and awe to the weird and mysterious music composed by Spanish and Moorish brains ; watched the marching files with staring eyes, till in the end, the fair complexions of Alvarado and the Northern Spaniards, the music, the sheen of bright steel, the prancing horses the helmeted and plumed knights advancing, created in the minds of the simple and uncultured Mexicans, emotions of wonder, fear and astonishment:

The Spaniards tried in vain to conceal their own amazement. They marvelled at the wonderful sea of strange faces and looked with wondering eyes on the canals flowing through the city, on floating gardens, on towers and temples.

HERE AND THERE IN MEXICO. 65

..... They beheld
The imperial city, her far circling wall,
Her garden groves and stately palaces,
Her temples mountain size, her thousand
roofs.

And when they saw her might and majesty
Their minds misgave them then.

Cortes, followed by his troops and his
Tlascalan Indian allies, riding the main street,
halted his men on the great city square, before
the huge temple raised to the honor of the war
god of the Aztecs to whom thousands of human
victims, slaves and captives, were yearly sac-
rificed. On the identical site where stood this
monstrous pyramid of human blood, dedicated
to a demon, there rests, today, one of the great
Cathedrals of the world, where the "Bloodless
Sacrifice," foretold by the prophet Malachias,
is daily offered to the true and only God.

When Cortes and his little army entered
Tenochtitlan, now Mexico City, the Aztec
capital was said to contain a population of from
two or three hundred thousand souls. The pres-
ent city of Mexico is built on the site of the or-
iginal city, but, of course, many topographical
changes have taken place both in the capital
and in its immediate neighborhood. The canals
have disappeared with the salt water and marsh

lands which surrounded the ancient city. Four centuries ago, nearly all the houses of the poor were built on piles and raised above the floods which every year inundated the capital by the overflow of Lake Tezcoco. The great cause-way leading north from the royal residence of Iztapalapan was intersected by another which lead westward to the town of Tacuba. In the very heart of the city surrounded by imposing buildings, towered the great Aztec temple, a House of Horrors.

The Teocalli, as it was called, occupied the center of a large open square and was disfigured by grinning human skulls and hideous serpents of stone. Four battlemented gateways gave entrance to the temple square. The great structure itself was built in the form of a pyramid fashioned of earth and pebbles cemented, and on the west and south sides coated with stone slabs. It was of five stories narrowing as it went up. To reach the sacrificial platform on the summit, the victims ascended a flight of circular stairs winding on the outside and circling the building four times.

The effect on the gazing multitude of barbarous Aztecs when the victims were led to their doom, followed by a procession of temple officials which in full view of the people

passed four times around the building to the accompaniment of weird and wild minstrelsy, must have been fearlessly impressive.

On an elevated platform at the summit of the temple, and in full view of the worshippers filling the square and roofs of the surrounding houses, was the large convex block of black granite on which the hapless victim was stretched, knifed and his palpitating heart torn out. The bleeding and warm heart, held aloft that all the people might see it, was offered to the sun and was then thrown into the gaping maw of the stone idol of Huitzilpochtli; the god of death.

The bodies of the victims were sold to butchers who carried them to their shambles, cut them up and sold the pieces by weight to their customers, by whom they were roasted and devoured. At the northern end of the open space were two buildings three stories high. On the ground floor of one of these structures were ranged the idols or sculptured images of the Aztec gods; the rest of the interior was filled with ceremonial instruments and with implements used in special services. In another building was raised a large altar dedicated to the sun where a blazing lamp burned night and day. If the flame was ex-

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tinguished by accident or neglect, it boded misfortune to the city. The official who had charge of the lamp was condemned to death if, by his neglect, the light was extinguished.

Here also was housed the huge cylindrical drum of serpents skins. It was beaten only when the capital was threatened with a great fire, by plague or an attack by an invading force, and, when sounded, sent through the city and over the valley of Mexico a weird fearsome and melancholy wail.

The Spaniards heard it with alarm and fear on the awful "night of sorrow" when sixty five of them were made prisoners, sacrificed and devoured by the Aztecs. In these minor temples, private sacrifices of human life were offered to the gods of Anahuac. Bernal Diaz, who accompanied Cortes when he visited the great temple and the smaller sacrificial buildings, tells us in his History that "The stench of gore and putrifying human blood in these heathen chapels was more intolerable than that from all the slaughter houses of Castile."

Within the walls enclosing the temple was a room dedicated to the mysterious Quetzalcoatl, the "Fair God," and here too were the training quarters of the boys and girls

destined for the service of the temple. East of the temple square was a room where birds of tropic plumage were kept, with wild animals from the mountains and reptiles sent from the provinces, and from the lands of the south. In long rows of cedar lined with down, or in troughs of pine or mud, snakes and sacred serpents were tenderly cared for, washed and fed. In another quarter of the city stood the armory, where the military paraphernalia, the bows and arrows, serrated swords, war clubs, shields and other battle weapons were arranged and shelved.

After the temple the great market was the most conspicuous building in the Aztec city. Of this structure the Mexo-Spanish historian Antonio de Herrera, chronicler of the Indies, 1549, writes: "The Spaniards were astonished at the throng of people pressing towards the market, and on entering the place their surprise was still further heightened by the sight of the multitude assembled there and the dimensions of the enclosure twice as large as the square at Salamanca. Here were traders from all parts; gold and silversmiths from Azeapozalco; potters and jewelers from Cholula; painters from Tezcoco; stone cutters

hunters, fishermen, gardeners, chair makers, florists."

Animals, both domestic and wild, were on sale, and beside them slaves with collars fastened to their necks. Here also were exposed provisions of all kinds; meats, the flesh of temple victims and prisoners of war; domestic poultry, game from the mountains, fish and fruits in all delicious variety and abundance; and, from temperate regions, green vegetables and the never failing maize.

In this huge market, and through all the city, women went around as freely as men. They wore skirts or petticoats of varying lengths with ornamental borders, but many of them were dressed in loose, flowing robes. Their faces were unveiled and their raven hair drooped far down the back. Their faces were of cinnamon hue and wore an expression of sadness due, perhaps, to their melancholy, weird and repulsive religion. Such, briefly was the Aztec city which went down to death after a seige replete with epic horror.

L VI.

BY WHOM WAS AMERICA DISCOVERED?

In the second volume of that most scholarly publication, the Catholic Encyclopedia, there is a brief, but rather unsatisfactory review of the historic, or legendary voyage of the sailor-monk St. Brendan. To my mind the water pilgrimage of Brendan into unknown lands in search of "O Brazil, the Isle of the West" and of souls to be converted to Christianity was an accomplished fact and was accepted as such down to the middle of the Sixteen Century.

The story of the adventurous monk and his companions had a commanding influence over the imagination of Europe during the middle ages and on the centuries coming down to the time of Christopher Columbus, which firmly believed that the brinish epic of St

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Brendan related a series of real and wonderful experiences. "I am convinced," writes Columbus to his friend and patron, the Prior of La Rabida, "that the terrestrial paradise is in the Island of St. Brendan which nobody can go to except by the wil' of God."

Sixty years ago the Scandinavian "Sagas" were deemed the poetic dreams of northern bards and the voyage of Lief Erickson to America a mythological tale. John Fiske and Luis Zimmer pooh-poohed the claims of the countrymen of Erickson to priority of discovery, but today he would, indeed, be a bold man who would deny Lief Erickson's right to a pre-Columbian landing in America.

Someday, perhaps, there will be found in one of Europe's great libraries a parchment, reposing amid heaps of musty manuscripts, which may prove for all time that long before the daring voyage of Eric, an Irish Monk had landed on a coast of the New Continent. I contend for the plausibility of the theory in favor of Brendan's discovery of America and his identity with the "Fair God" of the Mexicans. As I advance I will adduce reasons and arguments not found in the works of Fiske, Brinner, Douglas or in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

But first let us have some information on the life of St. Brendan, the Sailor-Friar. The ancient remnants of Irish tradition classify the early monastic institutions of the "Isle of Saints" into three great divisions of a mighty army in conflict with all the powers of evil and the legions of hell. Commanding the first division was St. Patrick and serving under him were British, Frankish, Irish and Roman bishops. This great host, the learned Usher tells us, shone like the sun. The second, lead by St. Columba was formed of priests and was bright as the moon; and the third which followed the banners of Aidan and Colman was an imposing and beautiful body of bishops, priests and hermits, fearless missionaries and ocean travelers.

To this third host belonged Brendan, who in A. D. 484, was born in Tralee, County Kerry, Ireland, and died in his 94th year at Clonfert, County Galway. Tralee is built on the banks of the River Lee, a tributary of the Shannon. In the same county are many charming sheets of water, including Valencia Bay, Dingle Bay and the beautiful Lakes of Killarney, mirroring in their romantic waters Ross Castle, Muckross Abbey, McGillicuddy's Reeks, and the memorial palace of the Earls

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of Castleross. At Valenencia Bay in 1857, Cyrus W. Field anchored the eastern end of the first Atlantic cable and advanced the civilization of the world many hundred years.

When we remember the singular prophecy, attributed to St. Patrick and fulfilled by St. Brendan, the fastening of the submarine cable in the shadow of Mount Brendan, which at an elevation of 3,000 feet dominates the southwestern coast, becomes an interesting coincidence.

From Brendan Bay, whose waters wash the rugged side of the historic mountain, St. Brendan, accompanied by his sailor-monks sailed away on his daring enterprise. From immemorial times there lived a tradition among the Irish and Scotts that far away to the west, surrounded by the waters of the great Atlantic, there was a land of mystery and near it was Obrazil, the isle of the blessed. The priests, monks and learned men of Ireland were famous for their familiar knowledge of the Holy Scriptures. They looked forward to the time when the prophecy of Isaia that "the Lord's praise would be declared in the islands of the sea that waited for his law." They believed that the "islands afar off that have not heard my name" had yet to be discovered, and that

when Jeremias, the prophet, whom they fondly thought to have visited their own Ireland, foretold that "the islands of the sea would hear the word of the Lord", he had in his mind these undiscovered lands.

St. Brendan, in his lonely retreat near Brendan Bay, pondered over these prophetic sayings of the holy men of old and believed the time had come to bear the message of the gospel to the people inhabiting these undiscovered lands. With his companions he sailed away and was absent seven years. After his return from the islands of the sea he visited Scotland and Wales where he evangelized the mountain tribes. He came back to Ireland and founded the monastic homes of Brandon and Ardfert. Here he again began his monastic and missionary labors and, in reward for his zeal and sanctity was consecrated a bishop.

He established his See at Ardfert and, in 555, founded a monastery in the County of Clare. He again visited Wales and lingered for a time preaching to the clans of Iona. Returning home he built churches in Galway, Mayo and Clonfert, dying at his monastery of Clonfert at a patriarchal age. Such, in brief, is all that has come down to us from these

early times bearing on the life and missionary labors of the apostolic man.

The Irish abbot is pre-eminently the Sailor-Saint of the calendar in which his virtues are honored on May 16th. He is also known as St. Brendan, the Elder, to distinguish him from another Saint of the same name, who was Abbot of Birr. In the middle ages and long after the voyage and navigation of unknown seas by St. Brendan, the stories of his wonderful voyage and discoveries were popular reading in the literature of Europe. They were themes of inspiration for poets and of absorbing interest for historians and writers of legend. Manuscript narratives of his adventurous voyage and daring explorations yet exist in Spanish, French, German and Italian libraries. Even today the quest of the "mariner-Saint" is a popular theme for romantic historians and lovers of verse. Thomas D'Arcy McGee, Eleanor Donnelly—sister of Ignatious Donnelly who wrote "Atlantis" and the "Great Cryptogram"—Dalton McCarthy and Ferguson have bequeathed to us many beautiful poems on our saintly and romantic hero and his daring voyage.

The hands of my clock in this solitary little Inn of Santa Anita are approaching mid

night, so I'll close this letter to you with a stanza or two from the pen of poor D'Arcy McGee, the brilliant Irish-Canadian poet who, fifty years ago was shot to death in Ottawa, by one of his own misguided countrymen.

Mo. Brindin, saint of sailors, list to me,

And give thy benediction to our bark.

For still, they say, thou savest souls at sea,

And lightest signal fires in tempest dark.

Thou soughtest the promised land far in the west

Earthening the sun, chasing the Hesperian on,

But we in our own Ireland had been blest,

Nor ever sighed for land beyond the sea.



L VII.

BRENDAN AND THE FAIR GOD

I am now about to enter upon the claims of Irish bards and historians to the priority of right of the discovery of America by St. Brendan, and my own contention for his identification with Quetzolcoate, the "Fair God" of the Mexicans and Mayas.

It is well known to every student of Scandinavian literature that the history and tradition of Norwegian exploration assumed the ocean voyage of Brendan to have been a reality. Lord Dufferin in his book "High Latitudes" tells us that the Norsemen found the remains of an Irish settlement in Greenland. Prince Henry, the Portuguese sailor and liberal patron of daring adventure in the fifteenth century, fitted out at his own expense an expedition to search for the land discovered by St. Brendan and to continue explorations after it was found.

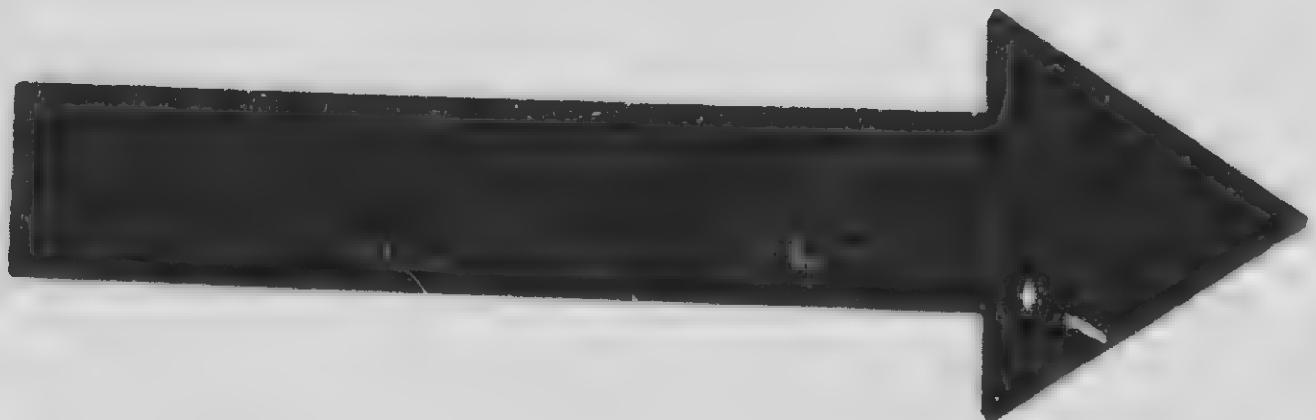
Let us now approach the documentary proofs in favor of the actuality of the ocean voyage and the reasons for assuming that the sailor-abbot reached America centuries before Lief Erickson visited the coast of Massachusetts. On my return to Paris from Cairo, I many times visited the Bibliotheque Nationale (the National Library) of France and here, one morning, I made the acquaintance of Major General Butterfield. The brave soldier and distinguished American, though not of Irish descent, was searching for documentary evidence on the doubtful voyage of St. Brendan to America. By way of elucidation, I may mention that not everyone can obtain the privilege of examining the manuscripts which are treasured and exclusively reserved in the Bibliotheque Nationale. If you are not personally acquainted with some of the higher officials of the library, or intrude upon the chief librarian unsupported by letters of introduction from the ambassador of your country, or his secretary you are likely to fail in your expectations.

And now a word as to the history of that marvel of book, pamphlet and manuscript repository—the Bibliotheque Nationale of Paris. To those unfamiliar with the origin and char-

acter of this wonderful cemetery of the thoughts, speculations, dreams and hallucinations of ancient and modern writers and of the scholars of the middle ages, it will be interesting to learn that so intimately identified is the institution wth the political life of France that when the form of government changes, the library, like the maiden who becomes a wife, alters its name. In early times it was known as the "Library of the King." In time it changed its title to "Royal Library", then to "Imperial" and now it is the "Nationale".

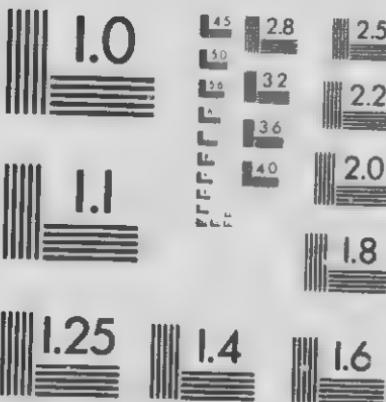
King Pepin le Bref, son of Charles, the "Hammer of France", away back in 750 A. D. was the first collector in France of books and manuscripts, many of which are, today, in this library. Thus it is almost 1,300 years old. The comparatively modern building is, in its compartments, subdivided in the best possible manner, and is fireproof. The collection of books, manuscripts and pamphlets numbers three million, three hundred thousand.

And now let me return to General Butterfield. As I was fairly well acquainted with Chevalier Ledru C. grain, the assistant librarian, I was able to obtain for General Butterfield daily access to the department of Archives, where, under the vigilant eye of a court-



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cous attendant, the manuscripts could be consulted. But, as the decipherment of the old Latin parchments taxed the patience of the General too severely, I recommended, and introduced to him, a student thoroughly competent in every way to copy and translate into French the ancient manuscripts. The reading of these priceless documents and the modernizing of their quaint and very often provincial latinity, is an art that may only be acquired by long and patient study. To the monks of the middle ages the scholars of the World are indebted for much of our classical and patriotic literature. But for them many of our ancient classics and much of our Roman and Greek literature would have perished. A great many parchments, we know, have been lost or destroyed; some are but fragments, while others have had a narrow escape from total annihilation.

The unassessed value of some of these manuscripts may be understood when we learn that, in past centuries large estates have been exchanged for a few of them, and that hundreds of crowns have been left in pawn for the loan of only one parchment. There were centuries when even the sale or loan of a rare manuscript was considered of such importance

as to have been officially registered with mortgages. Great and powerful as was Louis XI, Monarch of France, he could not borrow the Manuscript of Rasis, an Arabian writer, from the Library of the University of Paris, without depositing one hundred golden crowns. For the loan of a volume of Avicenna, a baron offered to the University a pledge of five thousand dollars, which was refused, because it was not considered sufficient to cover the risk incurred in allowing the illuminated copy to be taken from the library. This was in 1471, fifty years after a Countess of Anjou bought a manuscript of sermons for two hundred sheep, ninety martin skins and eighty bushels of wheat and rye.

I have digressed from the beaten path leading to the narrative of the voyage of St. Brendan that you may appreciate the extreme vigilance of the officials of the National Library when ancient and valuable manuscripts are examined even by a man of the responsibility and standing of General Butterfield. When leaving Paris for home I gave him my address, asking him to favor me with his impressions of the Brendan manuscripts and the result of his researches. I fortunately have with me

the letter I received from the General which you will read, I am satisfied, with deep interest.

LETTER OF MAJOR GENERAL DANIEL BUTTERFIELD

..... "The young man whom you introduced to me proved to be an expert translator, thoroughly familiar with monkish scroll and abbreviations. He translated for me the thirteen extant manuscripts of St. Brendan's voyages and advised me of no material difference in them reporting all to be substantially the same. If his translations be verbatimely true, my readings lead to the same conclusion. The manuscript which was in the best condition and said to be the most elaborate he copied with extreme care, furnishing me with its size, its age, and with everything of interest relating to it.

Learning that there were other manuscripts of the abbot's voyage in the Bodleian library at Oxford and one in the possession of the Archbishop of Nuremberg, I commissioned M. Richot, the translator, to visit Oxford and Nuremberg and secure copies for me. I gave him letters of introduction to the American Ambassador at London and to the consul at Nuremberg.

The manuscript in the Archbishop's possession was only a translation and had no historic or critical value. But it must not be discarded as entirely valueless, for it is a proof of the faith of the Germans of the twelfth century in the voyage of St. Brendan. I am constrained to acknowledge my indebtedness to you for the courtesy of the Librarian of the Bibliotheque Nationale who permitted me to have a photograph taken of the most valuable and important of the thirteen manuscripts, replicas of which I now have.

This manuscript came into the custody of the library from the Abbey of St. Martial, Limoges, (Haute Vienne) and is of the tenth century. It begins with homilies of St. John Chrysostom, St. Augustine, St. Gregory and Origin. Then follows extracts from the Ant-Nicene Fathers, letters from St. John, and extracts from the lives of St. Amand of Angouleme, St. Basil and St. Eparchius. The "Life of St. Brendan" covers the pages from 103 to 109 of the bound volume. The manuscript is thirteen inches by six and is somewhat reduced in my photo-copy.

"It begins with a description of St. Brendan and with information given to him by Father Barindus, who tells Brendan of the

sailings of a sailor, a friend of Barindus, and of the unknown land he had visited. St. Brendan read the narrative of Barindus to seven Monks chosen from his Community of three thousand and then addressed them in these words:

"My beloved fellow warriors, I ask of you counsel and help, inasmuch as my thoughts and my heart are bent on one desire, if it be the will of God. That land of which the good Barindus told me is the promised land of the saints and I have set my heart upon it. What say you? What counsel do you give me?"

Their answer was: "Abbot, your will is ours: have we not left our parents, have we not forsaken our inheritance, have we not delivered ourselves up unto you? Therefore, with you we are ready to go unto life or death."

"They were prepared to give their lives to the conversion of them, who sat in the shadow of death. For they accepted the tale of the sailor as a revelation from on high directing them to go in search of the land prophesied by St. Patrick.

"The Apostle of Ireland, when standing on a hill of Munster overlooking the Atlantic, foretold that a man of renown would arise in

Ireland, go out upon the sea and find the promised land. This prophesy was known to all familiar with the life of the Saint, and was delivered after the conversion of the King of Munster. Let me now quote from the manuscript

Preparing to Sail

'Adding to these seven counsellors another seven, making fourteen, they made camp near an inlet of the sea long enough to allow the passage of one ship.'

"It goes on to say that they took their tools and made a boat ribbed and planked within, as was the custom in those parts, and covered it with hides of oxen, caulking all the seems of the skins from the outside. In addition to sufficient food and water for forty days, they took in extra supplies and oil for the skins and many things which pertain to the wants of human life.

"They went abroad, and having unfurled the sails set out towards the Summer Solstice. They had a prosperous voyage to the west, their only necessary labor, as they sailed, being to keep the ship braced up. After fifteen days the wind failed them and the brethren rowed

till their strength failed them. St. Brendan comforted and consoled them:

"Fear not, brothers, he said, for God in this is a helper and a seaman and a captain. Rest you now and give out the sails; let God do with his servants and the ship as he pleases."

"After forty days, when they were about to begin using their extra food and drink, they came in sight of land very rocky and high above the sea, streams descended from the land and flowed into the sea. They landed and found the country fertile, well wooded and many flowers, birds and beasts."

I have found enough in this manuscript to convince me that if Brendan did not discover America he prepared the way for those who did. There are passages in the manuscripts which undoubtedly encouraged Columbus to embark on his venturesome voyage. Positive evidence of Brendan's discovery may yet be forthcoming: the plausible evidence is persuasive, if not convincing, to any unprejudiced mind. Let me again quote a few paragraphs from

The Original Manuscript

"Behold the land, oh brothers, which you have sought for so long a time.

"The reason you saw it no sooner was that God willed to show you the secrets of the ocean.

"Return, therefore, to the land of your nativity, carrying with you all the fruits and gems that your ship will hold, for the days of your journey are near to a close and you will sleep with your fathers. But after the lapse of many years this land shall be made known to others when Christianity shall have overcome pagan persecution. Now this river which you see divides the land, and as it now appears to you rich in fruits, so shall it one day appear without any shadow of night, for its light will be Christ's."

Now a word as to the accepted belief in the fifteenth century of St. Brendan's voyage to America. The early Portuguese explorers had implicit belief in the existence of the land and in their long sailings were hoping to rediscover it as they did the Azorean Islands. When the Crown of Portugal ceded dominion over the Canary islands to Castille, the cession included St. Brendan's land if it should be found. I may only add, in conclusion, that I am almost persuaded that the Irish Saint discovered America.

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I renew the expression of my gratitude to
you, Reverend sir, and beg to subscribe myself
Most respectfully yours,
(Signed) Daniel Butterfield

L VIII.

THE FAIR GOD

You will remember that in one of my letters I described the march of the Spaniards through the Aztec capital, I dwelt upon the amazement which seized upon the semi-civilized people when they beheld for the first time these wondrous strangers who came among them from —they knew not where.

From immemorial times they were expecting the return of a white man who had lived with them for a time in days of old, one whom their ancestors had deified. As Cortes, mounted and panoplied, rode, at the head of his companions through their staring ranks, they asked: "Is this wonderful being, clothed and bonneted in strange material, our long awaited Quetzalcoate?"

Centuries before the coming of the Spaniards a tradition survived among the Mexicans

and the tribes of Yucatan that some time in the remote past a mysterious and aged man, tall of stature, with a flowing beard and fair complexion, came to their land from a country beyond the great Atlantic Sea and dwelt for years with their forefathers.

It was he who changed the primitive rites and form of their religion, instructed them in the art of government, improved their rude methods of cultivation, preached a higher morality and taught them the use of metals and working in stone. Before leaving for his own country beyond the sea, he tarried for a time in the City of Cholula where a temple was afterward dedicated to his worship on the summit of a pyramid raised in his honor. This cyclopean pyramid is one of the most colossal works of ancient man in the old or the new world and by its size and dimensions challenges the wonder of the traveler and staggers belief itself.

From Cholula this extraordinary man traveled to Campeche, on the Gulf of Mexico. Here his boat made of serpent skins, was moored awaiting his coming. When bidding the people an affectionate farewell he promised to return and dwell for a time with them. Then he sailed away and they saw him no more. It

Opposes certain traditions still living at the time of the discovery of Mexico and Yucatan, from the universal expectation of the people of the return of a fair god whom they called Quetzalcoatl that, at some time in the past, long before the conquest, a Christian priest dwelt among the early tribes and introduced a higher civilization and a purer conception of the supernatural.

All early Spanish historians, lay and clerical, agree in recording the tradition and the expectation. It is not easy to determine what were the actual doctrines taught by the patriarch, for after his departure, the licentious errors of a foul idolatry revived and largely displaced the instructions and doctrines of the mysterious stranger.

Perhaps the most reliable authority on the rites and religious ceremonies of the Aztecs is Father Bernadino de Sahagun, a member of the great Franciscan Order.

He came to Mexico, as a missionary in 1529, and by his zeal, the purity of his life and by his scholarship was of incalculable service to religion and of great assistance to all who, since his time, have written on primitive Mexico and its people. He did for the preservation in literature of the early Mexican

customs, social manners and religious rites what Bishop Landa accomplished for Yucatan, Chiapas and Tabasco.

And here I may be permitted, in harmony with Charles F. Lummis, A. F. Bandelier, Hubert Bancroft and others, to maintain that the learned missionaries from Spain to the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, have by their industry, observation and scholarship made us their grateful debtors. The early missionaries to the West Indies, to Canada, to Mexico and South America have willed to us, in their writings, imperishable and invaluable information on a multitude of subjects, bearing upon the customs, traditions, habits and mode of living of the indigenous races of our continent. Now that their works are being translated into English we are, at last, learning to appreciate the indefatigable zeal, the industrious research and the historical accuracy of the writings of the early Spanish and French missionaries.

Father Sahagun, in his "Historia Universal de Nueva Espana", informs us that, according to Mexican tradition the man to whom the Aztecs gave the name Quetzalcoatl and, who they believed to be a god, was a white man wearing a long beard—the Mexicans and the

Southern tribes were beardless—that he came from the East, from the other side of the great sea; lived among them for years, taught them a new religion and promised, when about to sail away, that he would return to them.

In all this there is nothing very incredible, for it was possible that, sometime in the early past, a ship, carrying with her crew a chaplain, might have been driven out of her course by unfavorable winds, or strong currents, and be wrecked or beached on the shores of Campeche. We might cite many authenticated instances of ships from Asia, or Europe, which were carried out of their lanes and wrecked on the coasts of America. That sometime in the sixth century, of the Christian era, a white man, probably a monk, visited Mexico and Yucatan is, today, the opinion of many learned men.

Sahagun says that there can be no doubt of an anti-Spanish introduction of some form of Christianity among the races of Mexico and the Yucatan Peninsula. The Spanish missionary Bishop Landa of Yucatan, writing in 1573, states that among the aborigines there were many early Christian ceremonies. They confessed their sins at stated times to their priests; their children were baptized with wat-

er and a white cloth was used in the ceremony. The baptized children were given god-fathers and god-mothers and they believed that by this rite of baptism an evil spirit was driven out of the body of the child and that a good spirit entered and assumed control of soul and body. The rite of baptism was called by them the "Descent of God" (que quiere decir baxada de Dios—Landa, p. 152) They went on pilgrimages to sacred shrines; fasted and abstained from meat on certain days; offered wine in oblation to their gods, and their widows did not remarry till after a year's mourning for their dead husbands. They kept a light burning, night and day, in their central house of worship or temple, their nuns or vestal virgins lived in monasteries or special apartments; their Icon or high priest, during the three years of his temple service, wore the tonsure, drank no wine and lived a celibate life. Then, in their sanctuaries the cross—to the Spaniards the symbol of Redemption—was venerated and associated in their religious cult with one of their principle gods. These rites, with many other religious practices such as the use of incense and holy water, blessing of houses and exorcisms, bore such a striking resemblance to the sacraments, rites and cere-

monies of the Christian Church, that the Spaniards had no hesitation in accepting the tradition of the "Fair God" as the record of a fact in the early history of the country.

The Spanish missionary fathers and Spanish men of learning exhausted ingenuity itself in their efforts to solve the identity of this extraordinary man, deified by the natives as Quetzalcoatl or the "Fair God."

What was more natural, then, in that age of marvels, of wonderful discoveries and daily prodigies than to assume that some one of the Apostles, Saint Thomas, perhaps, or an angel in human form lived for a time among these newly discovered races and made known to them many of the doctrines of the Christian Church.

It mattered not that these Christian rites were encrusted with pagan superstitions or with idolatries foreign to Greek or Roman Christianity. Stripped of their heathen accretions the fact remained that the Christian Cross and Christian rites, mutilated it was true, stood boldly prominent in the rituals and symbolic parchments of these people, isolated for thousands of years from Asiatic and European civilizations. More than that in the doctrines preached by this mysterious man

some of the Spanish priests thought they detected the germs of the dogmas of the Incarnation and of the Holy Trinity, and that it was impossible for a pagan and an entirely unknown race to have a knowledge of these revealed truths unless they had been taught them by man or angel.

Who then was this Quetzalcoatl? The last syllable of his name stood for a twin, and they remembered that Saint Thomas was called Didymus—a twin. They believed, as did Columbus till his death, that the newly discovered land was a part of India, and, as a pious tradition recorded, that Saint Thomas, the Apostle, after preaching to the Bactarians and Persians, sailed at last for India, what was more reasonable than to conclude that the fair god of the Aztecs was the Apostle whom our Lord invited to touch and examine His wounds.

L IX.

THE MAYAS AND CHRISTIAN RITES

Now that you have read the passages cited by General Butterfield from the Brandan manuscript of the tenth century, you will, I am satisfied, admit there is at least a colorable probability that the Irish abbot found America long before the time of the Vikings. That famous voyage synchronized with the appearance of Quetzalcoatl in Mexico. Brandan and his sailor-monks sailed from Ireland about the middle of the sixth century. Now the traditions of the "Fair God" in Mexico and Yucatan at the time of the Conquest assign to that time the dwelling of this white man or god among them. "It is not at all impossible," writes the learned French archaeologist and antiquary, the Abbe Brasseur de Bourbourg, "that in pre-Columbian times some Christians crossed the sea and visited America. The

vague traditions on the reformation of religion and manners in Chiapas, Mexico, Oaxaca and Yucatan which took place about the fifth or sixth century would seem to confirm a European landing on the shores of this country.

"It was during this period, and almost at the same time," writes de Bourbourg, that these white divinities appeared; these extraordinary men, wherever they came from, whose memories yet live in the literature and traditions of the people from Peru to Michoacan." These strangers who preached sublime doctrines and purity of morals, who taught a higher civilization were, when they departed, canonized under the names of Quetzalcoatl, Sube, Virachocha and Xixipechocha. They laid the foundations of a new religion whose pontiffs, like the Dairis of Japan, exercised supreme authority even at the time of the Conquest at Lyobaa or at Mictlan, in the state of Oaxaca.

No one familiar with Mexican and Yucatan history will deny that the religious customs and practices of these early people bore a striking analogy with many of our Christian Sacraments and Sacramentals and even to the ceremonies of the religion of Moses. The religious traditions of all the peoples inhabiting the

the coast lands of the Gulf of Mexico when the Spaniards came recorded, according to the historian Herrera, that these white and bearded men came from where the sun rose beyond the sea.

Now, unless some one had introduced the rites of the Christian religion among these people, how can we account for the remarkable and certainly not accidental resemblance to the ceremonies and practices of the Church, today, as in the time of St. Brendan.

Now let us consult the most reliable and one of the earliest authorities who studied, independently and dispassionately, the religious life of the inhabitants of Yucatan.

During the years intervening between 1543 and 1579, Diego de Landa, of the princely House of Calderon was missionary priest and missionary bishop to Yucatan, Chiapas and Tabasco. After his elevation to the Episcopate he established his see at Merida, Yucatan, where in 1579, he died at the age of 54. From this saintly bishop we have inherited a most valuable and accurate account of the customs, manners and religion of the Indians inhabiting these lands in his time. The title of his rare and priceless book is "Relacion de las Cosas

de Yucatan, or Report on the State of Things in Yucatan."

I will translate a few of the paragraphs bearing upon the subject, leaving you free to draw your own conclusions.

BAPTISM—"When anyone wishes to have his child baptised he goes to the priest and a day is appointed for the ceremony. For three days before the child is to be baptised, the father practices abstinence from food. The ceremony takes place in a house selected by the priest, which before the ceremony, is purified or blessed. If the person to be baptised is of an age to commit sin, the priest advises him to confess his sins, which he does. The priest then baptises him. The priest, when baptising uses incense, oils for anointing, prepared water and a white cloth. He also makes use of certain prayers and rites to expel the evil spirit."

CONFESSON—"The Indians know when they do evil and they believe that all sickness, suffering and death itself are punishments for their sins. It is a custom with them to confess their sins. When they are seriously sick, or in danger of death they send for their priest and confess to him. If they cannot get a priest they confess to their fathers or mothers.

or wives to their husbands or husbands to their wives."

They practised exorcisms or the casting out of evil spirits, used sacred water, incense and lights. There were other ceremonies having a remarkable affinity with those of the Catholic Church.

They claimed that these religious rites came down to them from the time of the white gods. Now considering the striking resemblance between these rites and those of the pre-Reformation Church; the indisputable tradition of the visit of white men from beyond the sea; the sailing of St. Brendan and his companions in A. D. 555, the time early in the fifth or sixth century when, according to Brasseur de Bourbourg the strangers landed in Mexico, or Central America, there is certainly made out a strong case in favor of the voyage and discovery of America by Brendan.

To my mind the probabilities entering into the controversy are much more plausible than were the arguments in favor of the discovery by Lief Erickson before the Loraine Historical Society proved to a certainty the voyage and landing of Erickson in the eleventh century.

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"After an exhaustive examination of all the traditions and documents extant," writes Vosious in his "Desertation on the Age of the World" I am satisfied that Christianity was preached in Peru, Mexico and Central America long before the coming of the Spanish Friars."

L X.

THE OPAL CITY

On my way from El Paso, Texas, to Mexico City, I made a few days' visit to Queretaro, one of the quaintest and most interesting cities in the Republic of Mexico. The ordinary tourist never visits it and it is altogether unknown except as the name of a station on the Mexican Central Railroad where topazes and beautifully colored opals are sold by gaudily dressed boys and girls. When I entered the City which is a mile or so from the railroad depot, it was almost 9 o'clock at night but the band was still playing in the "plaza" which was filled with people assembled in the historic and romantic square to listen to and applaud the musicians and the music.

The walks of the plaza were lighted with incandescents, odorous with flowers, vocal with music and song while the gorgeous palm trees and tropical shrubbery imparted a mysterious charm to the fascinating place. From the win-

dow of my hotel room I could look upon this floral square, the very heart and centre of the city. Beyond it was the city market, the entrance to which was marked by a tall stone arch, a fountain and the life-sized statue of a Triton. In the morning this market is crowded with vendors and buyers, but when the sun is setting it becomes, in harmony with the early history of the land, a place of silence and mystery.

Silence and mystery! These are the attributes which belong to Queretaro above all others. For the city is filled with the memories of great men and great events and its life is largely of the romantic and warlike past. Its forty thousand inhabitants are contented if not rich, its monuments are not often visited by strangers, its thrilling story seldom told. Even the native, basking contentedly in the glorious sunshine, seems indifferent to or ignorant of the history of the heroic men whose fame is indissolubly associated with the city. It is only when you meet and partake of the lavish hospitality of the well-informed or prosperous citizen that you hear for the first time of the remarkable men and events which give importance and heroic setting to the fascinating city

The native village of Querendaro—"A place surrounded by mountains"—which antitated by centuries the present city, was swept away by the Spaniards under Tapia in 1531 and on its ruins was founded the Christian City of Queretaro—"Queretaro of St. James." Soon the locality acquired a reputation for its splendid climate, the most salubrious in all Mexico, and from the wealthy City of Mexico, viceroys, generals and people of means with their households flocked to Queretaro where the religious atmosphere and the healing air and quiet of the town restored their shattered health.

In time Queretaro became a city of splendid churches, magnificent convents and monasteries which imparted to the place a unique distinction and a religious and social repose inviting peace, contentment and happiness. If we except Celaya, which lies in the valley of Laja, not more than twenty miles away, there was no city in Mexico where ecclesiastical architecture and religious institutions acquired more picturesque and permanent proportions than in Queretaro. Fifty great churches and sixteen educational institutions yet exist, after war, confiscation and vandalism have ravaged the ancient city. Many of

these churches and buildings are of historic interest.

The monastery of the religious order of the Teresitas, where the unfortunate Emperor Maximillian and General Mendez were imprisoned for a time, is a vast pile, now converted into a state school. The federal Palace occupies a part of the Convent of Saint Augustine and is famous all over the republic for the beauty of its architecture and the richness of the superbly carved marble galleries surrounding the courtyard. The venerable church of San Francisco, which, in 1863 was made the Cathedral of the diocese, was founded a few years after the Spaniards acquired possession of the Aztec town. As it stands today, it represents many years of patient labor; for though pronounced complete in 1698, it was at times repaired and altered, the last time in 1727. The beautiful choir, a mass of carved oak, now black with age, inclosing a tall music rack full of priceless bound volumes of ancient music, was completed a century ago.

It is passing strange that in this attractive and conservative city more plots and uprisings against Spanish Viceroys and Mexican Presidents were fomented than in any other town or place outside the City of Mexico.

The first proclamation of Independence which is intimately associated with the history of the city was the result of the conspiracy of Iturriigaray to secede from Spain and establish in this ancient dominion a new and more liberal government. Since then all revolutionary uprisings begin with a shout—a "Grito" for liberty, equality or death. Whether Iturriigaray, who by the way was viceroy at the time, really meditated rebellion against Spain is a disputed point to this day. But all agree that when the report of his defection was heard by the Spanish junta, he and the Intendant and some prominent men in Queretaro were arrested and deported.

A few years later another and more memorable conspiracy was hatched in a house overlooking the Plaza Mayor—the city park. This house, two stories high and in no way distinguished structurally from other houses, dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century. In 1810 it was the home of Miquel Dominquez, the "Corrigidor" or Mayor of the City. Dominquez, the historian Mendista, assures us "was one of those unselfish, devoted, high-minded men whose careers adorn every page of Mexican history." Be that as it may, his name and the name of his wife are held

in veneration wherever the annals of Mexico's "Wars of Liberty" are read. It was in Dominguez' house in Queretaro where the heroic parish priest of Dolores, Miquel Hidalgo, planned the uprising that brought death to him and independence to Mexico.

In another part of Queretaro, facing the attractive plazuela where rises amid palms and tropic flowers the statue of the Marquis de Aquilla, there is a long, low ochre coloured building with a "portal" adorning its facade. It is now called the "Palacio Municipal." But to Mexican patriots it is something more than a municipal building. It is a national shrine surrounded by an atmosphere of consecration. For here the brave wife of Dominguez, the friend of Hidalgo, spent many years of her honoured life in prison. Arrested by the Spaniards while her husband was with the warrior priest and the volunteers in the mountains, she was imprisoned in this building where eventually she died.

There is a statue to the memory of the noble woman in the floral square overlooked by the historic building.

This plaza or square is, like many other plazas and streets in the republic, called Independencia. In the middle, as I have mentioned,

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is a statue of the Marquis de Aquilla—de la Villa del Villar de la Aquilla—to give him the long, sonorous title which he inherited with great estates. This statue is cut from an onyx block and is somewhat weather worn now, but it still furnishes a fair idea of the early Spanish grandee in his glory and isolation. A fountain bubbles near its base and a tablet states that the construction of the monument in memory of the Marquis was begun on the spot in 1843; that the statue was dismounted in 1867 by a canon shot when the city was besieged by the "Liberalists," and was afterwards restored and re-erected. Queretaro has a right to honor the memory of this rich and benevolent Don, for he was one of the founders of her excellent educational system and, at his own expense, constructed the famous aqueduct which brings pure and refreshing water from the neighbouring mountain to the city. The work cost him \$100,000, and when it was finished he had tablets inserted recording the beginning and ending of the work.

The man, however, whose name and personality dominate Queretaro is the unhappy Maximilian. Here was planned the movement which made the ill-fated Austrian Archduke Emperor of Mexico. Here are the churches.

La Cruz and Les Capuchinas where, previous to their execution, were imprisoned the Emperor and his aids, Generals Mejia and Miramon. Here also is the Iturbide theatre where they were tried, found guilty and sentenced to death, and the Cerro de las Campanas where they were shot and the Church of Santa Rosa under which the bodies were buried for a time.

There is something profoundly pathetic in the nearness of the Llaca house where the conspiracy against the Emperor was hatched to this Church of Capucines where the sentence of death was pronounced. They are less than a hundred yards apart. The Llaca is a one story residence, the walls painted in rose colour and the windows barred with iron in the familiar Mexican style. The church of the Capucines is a magnificent structure dating from the palmy days of Queretaro when the city was very prosperous and its commerce large. Maximilian was confined in a room of the adjoining monastery, and today a broken pane in the window of that room attracts attention even from the heedless man passing by. It was in this room that Colonel Palacios refused \$100,000 to assist the Emperor to escape.

The Church of La Cruz where the Emperor was imprisoned after his surrender at the

Sierra de las Campanas is on the outskirts of the city. It is an interesting experience to wander through the cool and spacious aisles and gaze upon a miraculous stone cross and on many quaint and interesting religious paintings. Every foot of the surrounding grounds and vaults are memorable, for here Liberal and Imperialist fought desperately and their blood has moistened them many times. La Cruz was the key to the defense of Queretaro of which it formed a part, and it was a postern gate in its wall that the traitor, or patriot, Lopez, opened to the enemy on the fatal night in the memorable year of 1867. The vast college building attached to the church is now a barracks. An officer courteously conducted me through the long, echoing and vaulted corridors illuminated from the fan lights high up in the solid walls. We ascended a flight of stone stairs to the rooms which Maximilian, Mejia and Miramon occupied in the early hours of their captivity. Soldiers--Indians, Mexicans and halfbloods--were everywhere, many of them stretched on the flagstones fast asleep. The Emperor's prison is now used as a military office, and includes three rooms, only one of which opens on the corridor. Absolutely bare of decoration, the place is fascinating because

it has remained architecturally unaltered since Maximilian was here. The walls, in odd patches, are scaling but no paint brush is allowed to touch them. The apartments remain as they were in the Emperor's day, but the furniture he used has long ago disappeared.

It was from the Capuchin Church that Maximilian and his two generals were taken at day break on a balmy morning in June to the Hill of the Bells, just outside the city, to be shot. They now tell in Queretaro how the prisoners each in a coach by himself, passed silently through a great concourse of mute and sympathizing citizens. For years the spot where the three were shot was marked only by three little heaps of broken rock. Then three stone pillars were erected enclosed by a bronze railing. When these simple monuments were raised in 1887, the names of the three victims were marked upon the pillars. In 1889 the Austrian Government built over the place a handsome stone chapel, in the pavement of which are sunk three bronze plates, dedicated to the memory of the brave and handsome Emperor and his two generals, Mejia and Miramon.

Queretaro is full of relics of Maximilian. The City was always loyal to him. Here are

the gold-plated keys, very massive and deftly made, presented to him when he made his first imperial entry to the romantic city; and here too are the table, the chairs, the pens, etc., used at the court martial which met in the Teatro turbide and sentenced him to death. They are all—these souvenirs of the dead imperialist—fascinatingly interesting, but profoundly sad, with a suggestion of glory gone, of buried hopes and lofty birth.

The State of Queretaro is rich in arable land but agriculture languishes. The Federal and local governments have infused no enterprise into the great landholders, and the tillers of the soil are without energy. The city largely depends for its support and prosperity on the agricultural districts surrounding it. Its chief manufactures are the weaving of rebosos (the cotton shawl worn by ordinary women) and the cutting of opals, both cottage industries. In the poorer quarters of the city almost every house is equipped with a loom and members of the family alternate in the weaving of the brightly colored yarns. Queretaro rebosos are of a superior make and in the picturesque market square they are spread on the ground for the inspection of customers.

The opal workers bring the stones from the mountains and break the opals from the enveloping cyst with tweezers. It is very interesting to watch the process. They wrench the rock away from the gem with reckless energy, but with a skill and deftness of touch which long practice has made perfect. The rough opal is fixed with wax on the end of a stick and ground smooth on a small grindstone. The polish is produced by sandpaper and fawn skin. The process is amazingly crude but the results are beautiful. The opal-worker is conceded to be a master of his art if he turns out twenty gems in a day.

The Opals which are found in considerable quantities and of brilliant tints in the surrounding mountains are said to be superior to any mined in Asia or America. They are classified as white, yellow, red, brown, blue, green and gray. These Queretaro opals exhibit a beautiful display of colors when turned over in the hand, and the dealers are accustomed to show them off on black paper, which contrasts with the play of light and shade. The finest opals are believed to come from Australia and Hungary simply because those from Queretaro are so little known. This land, however, produces fine varieties and among them the

wonderful fire-opal distinguished by its fire-red reflections. The common opal has no color reflection from within. It is the opal of silicified wood and is known as wood-opal. Among the great variety of opals found here is the Hyalite, a white transparent species. Then there are others of fine water and many varieties of hue appearing in veins of feldspathic porphyry. These are also found in trachytic rock with specimens showing a white ground, from which the light reflects its rays extremely red.

Within quite recent years, an opal of the finest water, nearly eleven inches in length and five in width, from Queretaro was exhibited in San Francisco. It was valued at \$10,000. The best stones are found on the Esperanza estate about one hundred miles from Queretaro. They are opals of great variety and rare delicacy of hue. They are mostly of violet tint, but also occur in dark blue colors, throwing out local fire of great intensity.



L XI.

OPALS AND PRECIOUS STONES

Adverting to my last letter on "The Opal City" it may interest you to learn that the only gem stone systematically mined in Mexico today is the opal, and the only semi-precious stone the tecali or Mexican Onyx. The state of Queretaro produces more opals than any other portion of the republic. Tecali is found in the mountains southwest of the City of Puebla. It is a variety of clear alabaster and much of it richly veined in pleasing colors.

The pearl fisheries of Mexico, which two centuries ago were very productive and a source of great wealth, are confined to the shallow waters of the Gulfs of California.

The pearls of Montezuma, of which Prescott writes so romantically, were brought from the Gulf waters by Aztec pearl divers. When Porfirio Diaz—one time autocrat of Mexico—

appeared in any state function he always wore in his scarf a large black pearl which tradition said was the property of the eccentric Antonio de Bucareli who, in 1771, was viceroy of Mexico.

Opals of brilliant tints are found not only in Queretaro, but also in Hidalgo, Guerrero and San Luis Potosi. Before the declaration of independence and the expulsion of the Spaniards, Mexico sent a variety of precious stones to Madrid which for a time was the European entrepot for Peruvian and Mexican rare jewels. During the Spanish regime topaz and sapphire stones of finest water and brilliancy were found in some districts of Guanjuato, Camelia, San Luis Potosi and in the Tabares corner of Guerrero. Rubies were mined in the State of Durango and in parts of Lower California where the crystals are small but plentiful. In fact nearly all precious stones, in addition to those I have mentioned—such as Emeralds, Red Garnets of remarkable purity, Beryls, Amethysts and rare specimens of obsidian or volcanic glass are found in this wonderful land.

Of all the old time superstitions which we have inherited from ages before Rome was built, which have survived the memory of

medieval charms and Atlantic storms, the superstition relating to precious stones is the most persistent and long lived. All over Mexico I find this superstition to exist and to have a survival value. Maybe, before long the efficacy of some superstitions that are popularly associated with precious stones will be acknowledged and admitted to have a scientific basis. Many of us from a poetic or romantic sentiment acknowledge charms and superstitions as connecting links between the present and remote past, and which in all ages and countries make different families of the human race akin.

But, whether science can explain it or not, this age of materialism and scientific pretensions is steeped deeper in mascots and gem superstitions than many of us would care to admit. The mascots and charms treasured by officers and soldiers in the Pan-European War, and the spiritistic seances which have won over a great physicist and the greatest living writer of detective stories prove this beyond cavil. Temperance societies may some day stock up with amethysts and lend them to confirmed "drinkers," for, according to a superstition bequeathed to us from immemorial times, the stone possesses a secret which de-

stroyed all desire for strong drink. The Rev. Ben Spence, the Toronto temperance lecturer, holds the amethyst in contempt for, after repeated experiments, he is satisfied that the stone does not cure one of the appetite for liquor, but, unfortunately, it permits one to consume all the fiery fluid he likes without showing any of its effects. This however is not the result of experiments made by Mr. Spence, for ages before his time the Greeks, according to Plutarch, thought the Amethyst was a charm for counteracting the effects of wine. It was set in the rings of Abbots and Abbesses in the middle ages as an emblem of sobriety and chastity. It is the stone dedicated to the child born in February and an old rhyme credits it with freeing from passion and care the February child who wears it through manhood or womanhood.

The sapphire symbolizes truth and constancy for, says Erasmus, "If a person wears it in any haunt of dissipation, his actions would at once be known to the one he holds dearest."

According to another venerable tradition the sapphire is a sure preventive of insanity for the child born in September.

The maiden born in that month should

follow the advice given in an old couplet and
"A sapphire on her brow should bind,
'Twill cure diseases of the mind."

Llanos, a Mexican poet tells us "it is excellent for the fire of the soul, for the eyes and for glandular swellings of the throat and lungs."

Wonderful are the properties of the diamond which, according to Llanos, will surely bring "faith, purity, health, joy, innocence and repentance." Possibly the reason why the diamond does not bring "innocence or repentance" to the members of the "Smart Set" is because they have refused to accept "faith," the first of the diamond's favors. April is the month dedicated to the diamond.

As far back as the fourteenth century, the learned Jew, Rabbi, Benoni, preserved for posterity the prevailing beliefs of his day regarding precious stones. Strange to relate the most of these superstitions obtain every where in this twentieth century. For example; Agate quenches thirst and if it be held in the mouth allays fever. It is the birthstone for June, and the June baby who wears it may, when grown up, command health, wealth and long life.

Red coral carried about the person is a specific for indigestion

The emerald, the stone of the month of May blinds a serpent that looks at it, and the May child who wears it "will be a loved and happy wife."

The ruby, the July stone, is the emblem of success; the wearer "shall be free from love's anxieties and doubts."

If you are engaged in a hazardous enterprise or follow a dangerous occupation you ought to wear a turquoise, for it will not only bring you happiness, but, if your life or character be in peril, will warn you to be on your guard, by turning pale, and the turquoise will do this for you, even if you were not born in its month, December.

That the opal, which claims October as its own, is fatal to love and sows discord between the giver and receiver, will be melancholy news to him who has bought an opal ring for his beloved. And above all, let him remember that it will surely bring ill luck when given as an engagement ring. Given simply as a pledge of friendship, however, it is the emblem of hope.

If you are troubled with annoying dreams beware of the onyx, for according to the word of the profound Benoni, "it contains an im-

prisoned devilish imp who troubles you when you sleep."

So much for gems and precious stones. I fear it might be sacriligious to entertain the malicious thought that possibly the remote ancestors of Rabbi Benoni, who were great and successful traders and dealers in gems, jewels and uncut precious stones, were partially responsible for the myths and superstitions so elegantly and astutely, and for all time associated with gems and precious stones.



L XII.

THE LOST MINES OF MEXICO.

Mexico possesses mines of almost every known mineral, and the interest in and working of these mines has contributed to dwarf the agricultural development of the Republic which has more than sixty different classes, or varieties of agricultural products. When Spain conquered the country and explored it, she exerted her energies to make the mining of silver the sole occupation of the people.

If we may trust Mexican historians, Spain, to replenish her depleted coffers, interdicted all commercial undertakings. Even the olive trees, introduced and planted by the Franciscan fathers during the early occupation of the land were by order of the home government cut down.

It is not then strange that Mexico was among the last of the nations to surrender her

silver standard, for she produced enormously of silver,—more than two-thirds of all that metal in use today. Even other metals were neglected, but during the presidency of Porfirio Diaz a great impetus was given to the baser metals such as iron and coal, and to the development of her wonderful oil regions.

Beyond dispute Mexico is among the greatest oil and coal bearing countries in the world, and has the largest natural deposit of iron, near the city of Durango, in America. In 1904 Mexico was third on the list of copper-producing nations, the United States being first and Spain and Portugal combined the second.

But, to return to the silver and opal mines which seem by their history, legend and traditions to fascinate us. Among the rich mines worked by the Spaniards was the Tarasca, in Sonora, of which Humboldt wrote so fascinatingly and Ward and other writers mention favorably. The history of Tarasca, if we may believe tradition, is a story of evil deeds, of duplicity, of theft, greed and of all the base passions aroused by cupidity and avarice. It is said that the mine was worked centuries before the Spaniards came to Mexico, and the gold and silver fashioned into ornaments by the na-

tives. I saw in the town of Guaymas a necklace of a flying fish purchased from a Maya Indian who said that the metal was dug from the Tarasca mine before the Spanish settlement. This mine was acquired by the Crown of Spain after he had been exploited and worked by individual Spaniards.

When the Mexicans achieved their independence, the overseer of the mine and its administrator, Don Juan Moreno, before seeking safety in flight, destroyed and concealed the shafts, tunnels and openings. After the restoration of peace Tarasca was looked for in vain, though the mine now known as Ularbo is believed to be the same.

Ularbo is included in the properties controlled by the Finos Altos Mines Company which owns valuable and extensive gold-silver mines in Sonora. It was at Ularbo that Lord Hepburn was murdered in 1892 by a Mexican. The murder created great excitement in England and Mexico. The Mexicans used every endeavor to discover the murderer, but could only determine that he was one of twenty-six men and as not one of them would confess to the assassination the whole twenty-six were deliberately, imposingly but calmly, marched

to the top of a neighbouring hill and shot. A rude cross marks the place of their burial.

Taiopa.

But the lost mine about which tradition and legend gather thickest is Taiopa, supposed to be somewhere in the Shahuaripa district, Sonora. Little documentary evidence exists to confirm the tradition of the lost mine, or, indeed to prove its reality.

In the year 1897 a wealthy Mexican miner made a trip to Madrid and after a minute search, at great expense, found absolutely no data to prove that such a mine was worked for the Crown of Spain. But quite as reliable and trustworthy as most written documents are the traditions of the Mayo Indians. They stoutly maintain that Taiopa exists and some of them claim that they know its locality. Small quantities of very rich ore are occasionally sold at the mining camps and stores, but all attempts to follow the Indians to the place where it is found or bribe them to reveal it have failed. Wanting but little in addition to the corn they grow the Mayos superstitiously believe that if they made known to white men the locality of the mine they would perish of a lingering disease, or drop dead. To one not

acquainted with the Indian character this statement may seem incredible, but any prospector or miner in the Sierra Madres will affirm its truth. In fact large sums of money have been offered to the Indians to tell where the lost mine is, but until now they have revealed to no man the place of the famous, lost Talopa.

About 1863 a venerable Opate chief became dangerously sick in one of the Sonora Valley pueblos. He was nursed back to health by a Mexican woman, who was so well known and respected that any statement made by her was accepted without question.

The Opate returned to his tribe in the mountains and, from time to time, sent his benefactress rich pieces of ore which assayed thousands of dollars to the ton. One summer this Mexican woman went to the Opate village for the sake of her health and lived with the tribe for three months. Her kindness to the chief of the tribe when he was ill in her pueblo or village, her love for their children, her attention to the sick, and her little gift of gaudy colored ribbons and gay calico won the good will and affection of all the members of the Indian village. She talked with the chief she had nursed about the mine where he found the ore he had given her and from what he said to

her she became satisfied that the ore came from the lost mine, Taiopa. The chief told her he could not himself tell her the locality of the mine for, if he did so, he knew he would die. However, he commissioned two squaws to conduct her to a place near where the mine was located, telling her she could then easily discover it for herself.

The three women traveled nearly all night, passing through deep ravines and wooded hills. The fourth night, a few hours after the rising of the moon, the squaws led her into a great canyon and stopped by the side of a large boulder.

In the bright moonlight the woman beheld a large ore dump and an entrance in the side of the mountain, but she was hurried away by the squaws who feared the vengeance of the spirit guarding the mine. They travelled till the moon was hidden by clouds, rested a few hours, then hurried on before the rising of the sun, completely mystifying the Mexican woman as to the route they had taken.

They arrived at the Indian village some time in the afternoon, having taken four days to reach the mine and but one to return. The Mexican woman then understood that when going they had traveled by a circuitous way

that she might not be able to direct anyone to the hidden mine.

Two other mines about which there are many romantic tales are the Reina Mercedes and the Casa Blanca. The Reina is supposed to have been one of the rich Conchena group, and the Casa Blanca, rediscovered fifty years ago, is now the Casita. Near this mine, where are the ruins of an ancient church, two copper bells were found. Blown, in raised letters, are the words "S. M. Gaudalupe de Taiopa," which seem to prove that the Casita mine is the lost Taiopa.

This is the mine so intimately identified with the legend of "The Magic Scale and the Padre's Corn" told by Dillon Wallace in his "Mexican Sierras," and other romancers, who anticipated Wallace by many years. The legend appears for the first time in Zamora's "Historia de la provincia de Nueva Espana." Here is a condensation of it:

Felipe, a Franciscan lay-brother, had repeatedly helped and bestowed favors on the Yaqui Indians coming in from the Bacatate Mountains to visit the mission. In return for his kindness to them they presented him with gold nuggets and little bags filled with gold dust. Then the good Felipe opened his

heart to the little demon of avarice who said to him, "Felipe, find out from your friends the Yaqui where they get the gold. You will then become a rich man and can return to Spain, live like a great Don, have horses and servants and be somebody."

Felipe increased his kindness to the Indians, but when he spoke to them about the place where they found the gold, they remained silent. His many acts of kindness, in time, won over the Yaqui, and when about to return early one morning to the mountains they told Felipe to get ready and come with them. They said to him that when they were six hours on their journey his eyes would be bandaged and when they came to the mine where the gold was they would remove the bandage and he would then see "The Place of Gold."

Now Felipe was a wise brother, so he filled his pockets with white beads out of which rosaries were made. Then, after his eyes were bandaged, they renewed their journey through the mountains, the prudent Felipe dropping his beads as they went along. "Ah," thought Felipe, "they think themselves very cunning, but I'm a match for them, for when I wish to come back and get the gold, my white

beads which I am dropping will show me the way."

When they came to "The Place of Gold," they took off the bandage, and lo! Felipe saw a mass of gold nuggets and a heap of shining gold that might be taken up in handfuls. The brother looked in amazement around him; he was standing by a river flowing through a canyon and about him on every side were towering hills. Felipe had never seen the place before.

Returning bandaged, and bringing with him the gold nuggets that were picked up and presented to him by his Yaqui friends, Felipe dropped more of the white beads, congratulating himself on the clever way he was outwitting his Indian guides.

At last they reached the mission house, where Felipe dined and wined the Indians. When he was bidding them good bye and had thanked them for their kindness to him going and coming, the head man of the party advanced and presented him with a little bag filled, as the avaricious brother thought, with gold dust. "Good and kind Felipe," said the head man, "here are all the white beads you lost from your rosary on the way to and from

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"The Place of Gold." I gathered them up carefully one by one. They are all here."

In Zamora's narrative there is nothing about magic scales or grains of corn. Felipe, being a wise brother, would not drop grains of corn on the way for birds to pick up.

L XIII.

WONDERFUL CAVES OF CACAHUAMPILA.

When in Cuernavaca, a city of 12,000 inhabitants and the capital of the State of Morelos, I had heard so much of the wonderful caves of Cacahuampila that I resolved to visit them before returning to Mexico City. A Spanish gentleman, Don Geronimo Gonzalez, who had, a few days before I was introduced to him, returned to this city from an examination of the Caves, assured me that in their wealth of stalagmitic wonders, in beauty and extent they surpassed anything of the kind in Europe, or America. Boarding a Mexican Central train early in the morning I alighted at two o'clock in the afternoon at a miserable wayside station called Ixtla. The town, distant a mile from the depot, is very old; the river flowing through the picturesque place is spanned by a

bridge built in the time of Cortes. These early Spaniards were daring and extraordinary men who constructed roads, churches and bridges to last for all time and well into eternity.

In this delightful old town I engaged guides and horses and at seven o'clock the morning after my arrival, started for the caves.

We followed the ancient road, at one time a burro trail, over which in early times trains of burros or donkeys freighted with silver and precious stones travelled from Acapulco to Mexico City. We left this historic highway twelve miles out of Ixtla and soon entered the hacienda del Amor where we stopped to water our horses. At a peon's hut in this cactus rimmed little village I enjoyed a cooling and refreshing drink, almost as cool as ice water. In these inland villages and on the haciendas or great plantations ice, natural or artificial, is never seen, and yet they have a system for cooling drinking water that is simplicity itself.

This curious collection of huts, called Ensenanza, is squatted on dry, sun-baked, semi-desert land. There is just enough growth of wild grass and sage around it for miles to support the half wild cattle that drink from the

warm and unpalatable waters of a cenota or reservoir.

But at every dwelling, hut and posada there hangs an oval-shaped earthen jar, suspended by a rope or piece of lariat twisted from the hide of a steer. When you lift from this jar the cover which keeps out the desert sand, you dip out a cup of cold water which has never come in contact with anything save the sun exposed sides of the earthen vessel which holds it. This jar, a Mexican invention handed down from pre-Spanish times, is everywhere in Mexico called an olla. It is made out of sand and burro manure worked up with water into a pliable mass which, when it attains to the proper consistency, is molded by hand into the desired shape. Whilst drying the material becomes very porous and it is this porosity which imparts to the olla its cooling properties.

When the moulding is completed the jar is colored, inside and outside, with a bright and harmless vegetable paint and it is then ready for use. In a very short time the olla begins to become slightly dark with the moisture which seeps through the porous clay. The exudation is very slow and the moisture, as it passes

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through the pores of the jar, evaporates into the dry atmosphere. About a drop a minute trickles down the outside and drips from the bottom of the olla. It is this continuous and constant evaporation which cools the water, for by it the sides of the jar become chilled and the water inside grows gradually cooler.

Leaving the hacienda del Amor our way carried us along the banks of a rapidly flowing stream and after a few hours' ride we entered Cacahuamilpa, a little village embowered in trees of luxuriant growth. This small inland town, with its high sounding Indian name, has gratified its ambitions for it has its own plaza, its own fountain, tiled roofs and attractive church with a commanding tower and fine bell. Here I engaged torch bearers, sturdy youths clothed in white shirts and pants, and moved out to inspect the wonderful caverns.

After two miles of easy descent we stood before the great arched entrance to the prodigious cave. Below where we stood a river came rushing down with savage voice from the mountain whose crest was three thousand feet above the arch supporting the entrance to the cavern. Partly choked with rock fallen from above, its arched opening seemed to me to be eighty feet high and as we went down by a

zig zag path into the cool deep of the entrance corridor, the roof grew larger and expanded into an immense height and from the mysterious blackness a pleasant breeze visited us, coming from we know not where.

As we advanced the reflection from our torches illumined the majestic ceiling, while around us lofty masses of stalactites and stalagmites surrounded us like trees in a virgin forest. The hall we were now passing through is fully two hundred feet wide and its marvellous roof at least a hundred feet high. Across this hall in ancient times a river carved a right of way and when it disappeared or its course was turned it left on the soft rock beneath our feet and on the walls around us unobliterated signs of its primordial flow. And now a sense of vastness overcame me, I marvelled at the forces which produced this mightiest of caverns, and at the intricate carvings which the hand of nature alone could have wrought through uncounted ages of time.

We soon came upon what the guide called the "volcano," built from mineral deposits of subterranean geysers or from spouting wells which began to play after the ancient river had changed its flow.

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Here also were many mineral cones around the bases of which were brilliant deposits and glittering terraces retaining here and there basins of composite material which scintillated and coruscated in the flare of the torches. They are all empty and silent now but their shapes and forms are unaltered and the colouration as freshlike and attractive as their lines of beauty are perfect.

These cones and the deposits around them are all that remain of the boiling springs which for thousands of years were active. The material composing the deposits are of the very finest particles and feel like velvet when pressed between the fingers. The tallest of the cones is about thirty feet high and is formed of minerals and chemicals thrown out by an ancient geyser. All around are many dead geysers. Some of them have been extinct for ages and the plumbing under all of them gave out countless years ago.

A little further on and our torches revealed some exquisite stalactites pendent from the ceiling, and formations resembling Vatican tapestry or splendid drapery partially concealing a fantastically carved pillar which reached to the ceiling and resembled one of the Ninevite columns of the Louvre. This immense stalac-

ite was slowly, through thousands of years, formed by drops of lime water percolating through the superimposed rock forming the roof of the weird and stupendous cavern and, as it is substantially of the same thickness from floor to ceiling—two hundred feet high—and was formed by a drip of unvarying quantity it must be of immeasurable age. We moved forward perhaps sixty yards when, at once and no doubt by preconcerted signal, the torches were extinguished and, at the same moment, the guide shouted:—"Morning breaks," and at once we were enveloped in the pale blue light of morning. From where we stood to where the pale blue light of day shone the cavern stretched away, practically one great, magnificently vaulted chamber, more than two thousand feet in length and from two to five hundred feet in height.

Its ceiling appeared only from the entrance, its height has not been measured, but is of varying altitude all the way and, determining only by the eye, is from two to five hundred feet. Language is of little value in attempting to define the impression left upon the mind by the immensity, the stalagmitic beauty, the silence and the profundity of this huge and deep opening entering into the very bowels of

the towering mountain. Leaving our standing ground we climbed sharply up the steps and terraces of what was, in early times, a leaping and stormy cascade of a rushing river. We now entered upon a vast and wonderful chamber, marvelous in its proportions and configuration beyond anything I had ever seen. It is called the "Pantheon of the Dead," is filled with statue-like forms and partially divided by a curtain of stalactites. A large opening in the wall is called the "oratory" and was evidently the work of springs or geysers, for a cone of glittering feldspar—majestic in its isolation and beauty—bears testimony to the agencies which conspired to fashion it.

To light this wide and lofty room was beyond the power of our torches, and the blaze of two flaming brands of red and white fire but partially revealed its fascination and splendor. At the moment of greatest illumination the walls and ceiling were not revealed in their entirety, but towers of marble, with grotesque shadows, glittering peaks of stalactites like vast icicles, and a forest of strangely-shaped stalagmites surrounded us on every side. Many of the smaller stalagmites were beautiful in detail. In their groupings some were like superb altars of marble; others which

came into existence later, resembled young plantings; some were of the height and size of grown shoots and were deftly twisted into petals like the tops of dahlias.

They were beautiful to look upon for they all sparkled in fleckless purity of white or glowed with a subtle pink flame in the light of our blazing torches. We hurried on and passed into a chamber called "The Oven" from its resemblance to the conical out-of-doors Mexican stove; through the "Tomb of the Dead," the "Room of the Souls." Just beyond this room, a spring, trickling through the rocks, fills a basin—named "The Baptismal Font"—with water, spotlessly pure and translucent as glass. Leaving the Font we mounted over a heap of rocks and broken stalactites crushed by the fallen rocks and all mingled in confusion.

The next chamber we entered was called the "Rotunda of the Rocket." No light at our command revealed either the walls or the ceiling. The guide set off and sent up a rocket, which whizzed high in air and burst without revealing or touching the dome. Then a rifle was fired which produced a deafening commotion and sound which died above our heads in most awe inspiring thunder. There is no room

in the world of man or nature equal in its dimensions to this mighty subterranean "Rotunda." Its ceiling is higher than the gilded ball of the flagstaff of the Woolworth building and all the material entering into the construction of the Pyramid of Cheops might be stored here and not fill its space.

To dwell at length upon the vastness and wonders of these caverns would mean the writing of a large folio. Moving in its immense solitude and vastness I got no clear vision of the way in which one chamber led to another, except by the path I travelled over. Apparently the halls were, for the most part, separated by the cataracts, rapids and cascades of the ancient river, but whether the cavern always narrowed at these lines of partition or not I could not determine.

To be lost in these interminable, rayless vaults would mean to be sentenced to a death ending with mad desperation, hunger or insanity. For here there is a silence of unutterable loneliness, a sense of oppression and an absolutely unrelenting darkness, blacker than any midnight that ever enveloped man's habitation.

It would demand many days and many

guides to explore this unequalled creation of water and volcanic fires.

There are places that are never seen, there are depths immeasurable to man, there are labyrinths untravllled for there is a limit to the courage of the guides to whom modern facilities of exploration are unknown. "Beyond this," said the guide to me, "there is only one room into which I have been able to enter. The way is blocked. There is a small hole, but it is high up—eighty feet up—and we cannot get up to it to pass through."



L XIV.

"JE ME SOUVIENS"

When President Wilson signified his willingness to accept the mediatorship of Argentina, Brazil and Chile in the Mexican impasse he attached to his consent impossible conditions. These conditions were the elimination of Huerta and the restoration of constitutional government in Mexico. Those who know Huerta also know that he will never voluntarily consent to efface himself.

From the morning that Augustin de Ytur-
bide proclaimed, Feb. 24, 1821, his famous Plan
of Iguala down to the present day Mexico has
not, *de facto*, been under a constitutional gov-
ernment. General Yturbide, when he made
his triumphal entry into the City of Mexico,
Sept 27, 1821, ended for all time and at once
Spanish control over Mexico, and, contrary to
his hopes, the nation he created led to the es-
tablishment of a republic.

Territorially the Mexico of Yturbide was one of the greatest in the world. It covered the vast region embraced by the present Republic of Mexico, all Guatemala on the south, and on the north California, Arizona, Utah, New Mexico and Texas. On Feb. 24, 1823, the "first Congress of the Mexican Nation" was convened, and at its second session ratified the terms of the Plan of Iguala and the Treaty of Cordoba, entered into by General Yturbide and Juan O'Donoju, the last of the Spanish Vice-roys.

On May 19, 1822, Congress and the army proclaimed Yturbide Emperor of Mexico, and on July 1, Yturbide and his wife were anointed and crowned in the cathedral, the Holy Metropolitan Church of Mexico. He assumed the title of Augustin I., Emperor of Mexico. From the day he ascended the throne down to the present hour Mexico has been a huge Hacel-dama—a field of blood. The empire speedily collapsed. General Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna, who fills a bloody chapter in the history of Texas, raised the flag of a republic at Vera Cruz, and on Dec. 2, 1822, published his Plan of Casa Mata, embodying the principles of a constitution for Mexico. Yturbide was dethroned and exiled, with an annual grant of

\$25,000 as an acknowledgment of his services to the country. Ignoring the penalty of death, pronounced against his return to Mexico, the imperial exile landed in disguise at Solo la Marna, where he was recognized and arrested. He was tried for treason by the Provisional Legislature assembled at Padilla and condemned to death. He was executed July 19, 1824.

During the session of the second Mexican Congress a republic was re-proclaimed and a national constitution, patterned on that of the United States, was adopted. On parchment the constitution of the Republic of Mexico is above criticism. The condition of the country, the heterogeneous population, and the paralysis of official conscience, but, above all, the dearth of great and honest statesmen, have made of the constitution an impossibility, a mockery, and a jest.

This Constitution of the Second Congress proclaimed the Government of Mexico to be Democratic, Federal and Republican. It conferred on the states forming the Union the right of self government in internal affairs without prejudice to the sovereign power of Congress. It created a National Congress embodying a Senate and House of Assembly, vest-

ing, at the same time, all executive power in the President, and judicial authority in Civil, Criminal and Supreme Courts. The Constitution was proclaimed October 4, 1823, and on the 10th of the same month General Guadalupe Victoria was sworn in as the First President of Mexico. At once, two great political parties were begotten, the Federalists, or Liberals, and the Conservatives, or Clerical. With the formation of these parties anarchy, chaos and military autocracy have almost without surcease covered the magnificent land and its people, as a corpse is covered with a shroud.

From 1828 down to 1848 freedom of election was a farce and force of arms a grim reality. Gomez Pedraza, who was President in 1828, was driven from power by a revolution organized by General Santa Anna, and General Vicente Guerrero seated in the Presidential chair. On March 20, 1829, Congress closed, passed a law banishing all Spaniards — clergy and laity — who refused to take the oath of allegiance to the republic. Thus, at one stroke, all the Churches among the Indian tribes were closed, the mission schools abandoned and the mountain tribes suffered to drift back to paganism. When the war between the United States and Mexico

was ended by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, February 2, 1848, Mexico ceded to the United States, for the sum of \$15,000,000, nearly half her territory. General Scott, at the head of his conquering army, dictated the terms of the treaty, which stood unparalleled in history down to the time Bismarck and the Crown Prince of Germany, who enacted an unprecedented indemnity and wrested Alsace and Lorraine from France. In 1851 Mariano Arista was elected to the Presidency, supposedly by popular vote, but actually by adroit switching of ballots. Before the expiration of two years he was induced to resign by a threat of revolution and General Santa Anna, as military dictator, seized the Government. It is interesting to note that, with two exceptions, all the Presidents of the Republic, from General Yturbide to Huerta, were army men.

Under the plan of Ayulla, Comonfort became President, December 12, 1855, and in June of the next year published his decree of Desamortizacion, by which all Church lands were sold to the highest bidders. This was the beginning of the war upon the Catholic Church which for nearly 70 years in Mexico has been prosecuted with an adroitness and cunning almost Satanic in its conception and

execution. "Where faith," writes Robert Louis Stevenson, "has been trodden out, we may look for a mean and narrow population."

A new Constitution for the Republic was now drawn up and adopted. To this Constitution Comonfort swore fealty and renewed his oath of office. Encouraged by his party, the President ten days later abolished the Constitution he had sworn to support. He dissolved Congress and imprisoned Benito Juarez, Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, whom he feared as a rival for the Presidency. Confronted with a national uprising, Comonfort escaped to Europe carrying with him a generous competency.

Juarez now claimed the Presidency and, fearing his claims would be contested in Mexico City, he fled to Guadalajara and began at once to organize his Government. We next hear of him in Vera Cruz, from which city he sent out his proclamations as President of the Republic of Mexico. Meanwhile the Conservative party in Mexico City elected Felix Zuloaga President. Juarez and Zuloaga decided to rest their claims on the arbitrament of arms. The "War of Reform" began, and all Mexico was ablaze with incendiaryism, blood and assassination. It was the cruellest, most merciless

fighting Mexico had ever known. The war lasted for three years, and when Juarez, at the head of his victorious troops, entered Mexico City January 11, 1861, the nation was bled white and almost to death.

Then came the French intervention, the enthronement and execution of Maximilian, the return to a republican form of government and the re-election of Juarez as President who swore allegiance to the republic December 1, 1871.

Juarez died July, 1872 and was succeeded by Lerdo de Tejada who in 1876 was driven into exile. Then followed a succession of riots, revolutions and uprisings till December 1884 when Porfirio Diaz was constitutionally elected President. For thirty years, as a military autocrat he governed Mexico with consummate ability, if not always with great tact and honesty. Under his autocratic law and rule the republic made rapid progress in the material order due, largely, to the faith and enterprise of British, German and American investors.

In time, a large and influential class of educated, wealthy and progressive men became dissatisfied with the dictatorial and autocratic manners of Diaz, with his contempt of constitutional laws and control of the ballot by

which he reelected himself every six years.

Madero, Orozeo, Blanco and the bandit chief Pancho Villa rose in arms against the aged President who, in his eighty second year, fled with his family to Europe.

This happened, May 25 1911, and from that time until now lust, sacrilege, robbery, murder and assassination have escaped the reach of law and order.

Anarchy prevails and chaos, like mephitic air, is filling the land.

The atrocious acts of the revolutionists and appalling events which have happened since the flight of President Diaz are convincing proofs that a republican constitution based on that of the United States is not the best form of government for Mexico or indeed for any Latin American people. The truth is that the great mass of Indian peons numbering seven millions and very many of the Meelizos or halfbreeds care nothing for the ballot, make no use of it and do not understand what it means. Even the educated and wealthy Mexicans take little or no interest in the elections for they are satisfied that the franchise is a sham and the results of the elections arranged in advance. When, on July 12, 1859, the Mexican government, controlled by President Juarez

suppressed with brutal severity the missionary, educational and contemplative orders and opened a campaign against religion and Christian education, Mexico flung its glove in the face of God. It sowed the wind and is now reaping the storm.

With a Godless system of education; a priesthood crippled by poverty, by organized abuse and systematized calumny; a stage reeking everywhere with moral filth and sensual exhibits and a native and foreign literature extending atheism and a moral corruption that would make the devil blush, Mexico is travelling a fast pace on the way to national ruin.

Left to myself in the library of a young lawyer in Mexico City I examined the bookshelves and was astonished to find, translations of Herbert Spencer, Kant, Fichte and Nietzsche side by side with the works of Paul de Kock, Guy de Maupassant, Zola, Bozzacchio and Cassanova.

The books of John Stuart Mill, Adam Smith, the Positivists, Isidore Comte and Marcus Aurelius were indiscriminately sandwiched between the bawdiest and most sensual novels of the past two centuries.



L XV.

EARTH'S OLDEST LIVING THING

The writer of the article on the "Saintes Oak" which you mailed to me last week, contends that the Saintes tree which antedates the beginning of the Christian era by a hundred years is the oldest tree in the world.

There are a great many trees now living much older than the Saintes Oak. The chagon tree of Orotava, on Teneriffe, that was alive in 1867, was estimated by Humboldt to be ten thousand years old and was so large that it took ten with outstretched arms to surround it, and the Lombardy cypress, spared by Napoleon when his military surveyor ordered its destruction—is said to be as old as the birth of Caesar. There are the Cedars of Lebanon which were full grown in the days of Solomon; the Mount Etna Chestnuts which go back to the time of Tarquinus Superbus, the Yeio Tree of Braburne

admitted by arborists to be, at least, 2,250 years old, and the "Noche Triste" Cypress of Popotla, Mexico that was old when Cortes, driven out of Mexico City by the Aztecs (July 1, 1520,) rested with his officers in its hospitable shade.

Then there is the "Patriarch Conifer" of California that has just celebrated its 2550th birthday anniversary. The "Big Trees," as the venerable Sequoia pines are called, are standing today in the Calaveras County, California. They are found only in the two reservations, the "Calaveras" and the "Mariposa Groves" at an altitude of five thousand feet above the Pacific.

These wonderful trees are from two to four hundred feet high, from fifteen to forty feet in diameter, and are, as a body, the most remarkable of all trees for age, height and bulk.

The "Keystone State", the greatest of the conifers now standing, measures at the base of its bole ninety-four feet in circumference, while, in height, it towers three hundred and twenty-five feet.

These trees are beyond doubt very old, they antedate probably the Cheops Pyramid of the Nile. They may indeed be older than any monument erected by the hands of man, they

may be older than the oldest civilization on earth, than the civilization of China.

But the mighty "Keystone State" tree, rising proudly above its companions of the Sierra Nevada scope, is not the oldest tree on earth, for, according to Professor Asa Gray—the greatest arborist of his time, the "Tree of Tula", State of Oaxaca, Mexico is more than four thousand years old. This wonderful tree is today erect in the churchyard of the village of Tula which you pass through on the way from Oaxaca City to the wonderful ruins of Mitla. It belongs to the slow growing ahueatl or cypress family and is the oldest of the tree-monarchs of the world. De Candolle, the eminent Swiss botanist, proclaims the cypress to be the slowest grower of all trees, that naturally there is no limit to its duration or the term of its existence and its decay is due more to an accident than to any law inherent to its being.

Before describing this Methuselah of trees it may be of interest to remark that the Washington elm, at Cambridge, Mass., is among the famous trees of the world since Washington, standing in its shade—July 3, 1775, assumed command of the Continental army; and that although the great banyan tree

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of Calcutta, India, is only a hundred and twenty years old it shades more ground than any tree known to man.

The City of Oaxaca is clean and well-built. Its suburbs, gardens and plantations of cochineal-cactus invite admiration and praise. Porfirio Diaz, former President and autocrat of Mexico, was born here 84 years ago. It is the capital of the State of Oaxaca, is 5,000 feet above the level of the Pacific Ocean, and its edifices and institutions, such as the Institute of Science, and Art, the Cathedral, Museum of Antiquities, and the Bishop's residence and seminary are commanding and imposing architectural structures.

About six miles south-east of Oaxaca City may be seen that which is thought to be the oldest living thing upon the earth. This is the famous cypress known as the "Tree of Tula". It lives and stands a neighbor to the quaint and venerable Church of Santa Maria del Tule. In 1804, the eminent antiquarian and traveler, Baron von Humboldt, returning from his examinations of the remains of the pre-Columbian city of Mitla, in the State of Oaxaca, visited and measured the dimensions of this wonderful tree. In his voluminous work, "Histoire de la Geographie du Nouveau Continent,"

Humboldt records that he measured the girth of the cypress and attached a brass plate giving the date of his visit and the dimensions of the tree. He contends that the "Tree Tule" is five or six thousand years old.

All arborists admit that the members of cypress family of trees are very slow growers. Gazing with awe on the gigantic bole of this solitary survivor of the forest that disappeared in the remote past, one can, without any great flight of imagination, believe that it existed before the Noachic deluge and is today the Methuselah of the vegetable kingdom.

In 1903 Dr. Herman von Schrenk, a member of the United States forestry service, visited Santa Maria del Tula, measured the bole of the tree four feet above the ground, and certifies it to be 154 feet in circumference. Twenty-eight persons of ordinary size standing with outstretched hands in a ring and tipping fingers could barely circle this monstrous thing of life.

On the morning of December 19, 1914, I went by mule team from Oaxaca to see and examine for myself this "Arbol de Tule-Tree of Tule."

The quaint and picturesque little village of Tula is a somnolent, do-nothing, down-at-

the-heels bourgade, and is of no importance at all. With its tumble-down, rickety houses of adobe (sun-dried brick), its charming but neglected plaza, with its heroic statue of Porfirio Diaz, and with its free-from-care villagers, who in Summer lounge in the shade, and in Winter bask in the sun and thank God that shade and sunshine cost nothing, Tula is happy and satisfied with itself and rests in peace.

When I entered the church the transition was startling. A light was aflame before the tabernacle, stations of the Cross were embedded in the masonry, the floor and furnishings were clean and the atmosphere of the building familiar. While I knelt at the sanctuary railing I was home again. This church has an interesting history, which I cannot now invade. Over the entrance to the sanctuary is a beautifully-carved screen, richly gilded. On the south side of the church near the entrance, is an enclosed square where there is an attractive altar erected by Don Diego de Michoacan in 1728, "Para entiero de los ninos angeles—for the burial of Angel Children." For centuries the church has undergone no change so there is about it a comfortable feeling of conservative antiquity.

When I came out I had but to turn to the left and at once I was in the presence of the great "Tree of Tule." It bears all the marks of hoary antiquity, but its vast bulk almost terrifies you. Some time in the remote past, perhaps a thousand years ago, when the Turks were storming Jerusalem, fifty or sixty feet of its height and majesty was torn from it by a devastating rush of wind or by a tremendous stroke of lightning. It stands alone and was old

"While yet the Greek
Was hewing the Pentelicus to forms
Of symmetry, and rearing on its rock
The glittering Parthenon."

Its giant roots reach out 90 to 150 feet and grip the earth with such tenacity that the hurricane of wind which despoiled it of its beauty and its height could not tear it from its own soil. It is as melancholy and lonely in the desolation of its surroundings as is the "lonely column with a buried base" amid the ruins of the Roman Forum.

Humboldt, von Schrenk and other experts, have estimated its age at almost 6,000 years. Its age staggers belief, but accepting the lower computation, that of 5,000 years, its birth

carries us back to the times of Tubal Cain, when the properties of iron were discovered. When the seed from which it grew first fell at this precise spot in Tule Adam was yet living. When God informed Noah of the deluge and commissioned him to preach repentance 120 years before the awful cataclysm this tree was a healthy stripling, and it was strong and full of life when God made a covenant with Abraham 2,000 years before the Redemption.

In the presence of the gigantic strength, bulk and age of this living thing which laughs at Time and its gnawing teeth, whose birth was coeval with that of human history, and which seems destined to last for generations yet to come, I spoke aloud the portentous question of Solomon:

"Is there anything of which it may be said,
See, this is new: it hath already been of old
time

Which was before us?"

If this awesome creature had memory and power of speech, what a wealth of information it could give us on the origin of man on the American Continent, on the rise and fall of pre-Columbian dynasties in America, the life of these ancient cities of Mitla and Xochicalco.

now in ruins, and of the lost civilization of the Toltecs and Mayas. When I went out from the churchyard and entered the village I turned to look again and to bid goodbye to the "Tree of Tule," the oldest living thing now on the face of God's beautiful earth.



L XVI.

THE CACTUS AND DESERT LIFE

In one of my former letters I incidentally mentioned the Maguey Cactus from the sap of which the mild and wholesome drink pulque is brewed. When a Mexican owns ten or twenty acres of Maguey he is regarded by his neighbours as a wealthy man, for Maguey plantations are very valuable.

After a cutting is planted it does not call for very great care for the climate and the earth in which it grows are favourable to its development.

When this aloe—called by us the century plant, enters its eighth year it is full grown and is worth from ten to twelve dollars. At this age the tall and slender stem rising from the heart of the plant becomes crowned with milk white flowers or ball-shaped blossoms.

A plantation labourer or peon now cuts out the tall flowing shoot or treelet, leaving a bowl shaped hollow in the center of the aloe

or Maguey. This cactus basin, three times every twenty four hours becomes filled with sap which is syphoned out by the peon into a pig-skin bag which he carries on his back. A healthy plant surrenders from five to seven quarts of sap every day for a month. The cactus is then dug out and a young sapling planted in its bed.

When a vat is filled with sap or juice emptied from the pigskins there is added a small amount of rennet—a soluble ferment—which acts on the liquid and converts it into pulque, a mildly intoxicating drink which retails at two cents a glass.

No part of the Maguey is wasted. The roots when boiled make a palatable and nourishing food. The fronds—very large and thick leaves or blades—are used for fuel and for thatching roofs. There is distilled from the juice of this plant a very strong alcoholic drink called Mescal. When in Sonora a few months ago I was amazed to learn that Mescal, when drunk with a pinch of dynamite added to the drink, produced extraordinary effects in the consumer.

I thought I had heard of and sampled all known intoxicants from meercapicon to tequila, but every day I am learning that the

ingenuity of man, in straightened circumstances, defies limitations. I am becoming convinced that only by the decapitation of entire communities may prohibition become effective. I passed a day or two at the mines of Gaudelupe y Calvo, the guest of a prominent Mexican mine owner. We were sitting on his verandah, one pleasant evening after supper, when two peon miners met on the path that led from the mine to the shacks of the men. When these two exchanged salutations and passed on, one of them suddenly turned and said aloud to the other: "Come over to my Xacal ad have a 'dyna' with me."

I turned to my host and asked an explanation. "That," he said, "was an invitation to have a drink of a new kind of liquor they call chima. These two men are blasters, and unfortunately, like many more of our men, get drunk on dynamite. It is a habit that is rapidly spreading through the mining camps and threatens to impair the efficiency of the men and lower the output. No one knows who first discovered that dynamite, when taken with mescal produces the combined effects of opium and alcohol. Whoever he was the fiends should build a monument to him in Hades.

'The chima man is very dainty and particular in introducing the high explosives to his stomach. He knows that the stuff is manufactured for the purpose of smashing things, and that he must exercise care in preparing the charge intended to operate upon himself. From a stick of dynamite he cuts off a small piece, the size of a pea. This pea he dissolves in a wine glass full of mescal, or tequila, watching the incorporation of the explosive with the liquor with keen and pleasurable expectancy. When dissolution is effected, he quaffs the draught, seeks a cool retreat, rolls himself in his blanket and lays him down to pleasant rest.

'He sleeps for an hour or two, and in his dreams has traveled with the opium eater, the hashcsh fiend, with fairies and hobgoblins. The amount of dynamite consumed by the men in an ordinary camp is so great that already the quantity required for our regular work is becoming seriously affected. The vice is increasing among the miners of the Sierras and threatens to invade the saloons of the mining towns.'

It is very probable that the people who first landed and settled on the South American continent brought with them from Asia—

assuming they came from Asia—the knowledge of extracting alcohol from fruits and plants. Their descendants, as they became brutalized by feuds and wars and the evil results and dire conditions following internecine conflicts, lost their early civilization, its arts and acquired knowledge, but retained the secret of producing intoxicating drinks. Among all the southern tribes, not families remember—I know of no exception—savage man was and is given to drunkenness.

In the vegetation of the desert the cactus with its innumerable varieties takes first place. They are all armed with long or short tough spines some of which can penetrate the thickest boot. The solitary and strangely shaped Yucca, the Mesquite, the Catsclaw and many shrubs are all armed for defence. Some exude poisonous juice, and others unpleasant odors. The sage brush desert plant is about the only one that apparently has no protecting spines. Probably its taste is not agreeable to desert animals. Among animals living on these great desolations of sand nearly all are armed with sharp teeth, odors, spines or poison to ward off attack, while some depend upon their fleetness, artful skulking and hiding.

The spined and repulsive Gila monster, the

horned toad, the tarantula, the desert wasp, the scorpion and the horned rattlesnake are among the desert denizens and their sting, or bite is exceedingly painful and often fatal. Then there are many varieties of lizards, some large, others small, and of many colors who protect themselves only by their speed. The prowling coyote, the snarling bobcat, mountain lion, Jack rabbit, Chucawalla, the deadly "sidewinder" or crotalus, the ibex and an occasional antelope, all find here their sustenance.

Among the smaller animals are the gopher, kangaroo rat, trade rat, hydrophobia skunk, sand squirrel and countless mice. The burro, or foot traveler, seldom sees any of these, but the man camping in the desert soon becomes acquainted with some of them. Perhaps the very first night he makes camp he will be visited by a traderat, who will carry away all that portion of his outfit that is not too heavy for his ratship to handle, and invariably leave a small stick or stone in its place. A hydrophobia skunk will also patronize him and lunch from any potatoe skins or bacon rinds that may be lying around. It is firmly believed by prospectors that the bite of this skunk produces hydrophobia. Gila monsters and rattle snakes are plentiful but seldom seen.

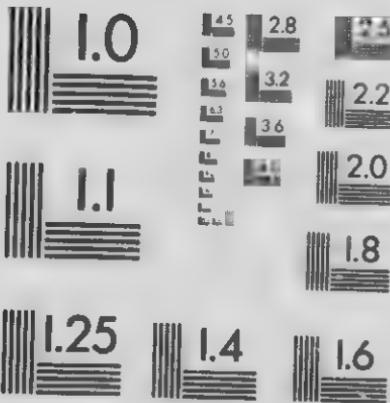
All life on the desert lives by its power to resist thirst. All desert plants are so constructed that they are able to store away and retain moisture against a time of prolonged drought. The cactus called the "barrel" is eighty per cent water and, wonderful to relate, flourishes best in driest deserts where there is not a spring or river within hundreds of miles and where rain falls only once in a year or even in two years. Other kinds of cacti hold from sixty to seventy five per cent water and how they get the water or where it comes from, for the air is furnace dry, no one has, until now, been able to tell. The Yucca tree is actually a reservoir of water and this is so well known to the Indians that they often rely upon it to quench their thirst when crossing a desert.

There is another desert problem that has not to this day been solved by anyone, that is the hidden presence in the arid sands of an infinite number and variety of seeds of plants and flowers which flower and bloom only on the very rare occasions when there happens to be a rainfall. Such a phenomenon occurred last autumn in the Chihuahua desert where rain fell for the first time in many years. In a few hours, and as if by a miracle, the sands



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were radiant with a covering of tiny plants and gorgeous flowers never before seen by the few people living there and which were entirely unknown to the oldest Indians. When the hot sun dried the sands this phenomenal vegetation withered and vanished. The seeds are doubtless still there, as in all great deserts, but where they came from nobody can explain.

Bayard Taylor, traveler and author, records in one of his books a similar phenomenon which happened in 1880 on a desert of Peru lying between the Andes and the ocean. Heavy rains fell for the first time in centuries. There were no records of previous rains, but for two weeks daily downpours of rain amazed the natives, and, during this time, plants and flowers that were never seen before appeared and covered with a luxuriant vegetation the barren sands. They lived but a few days after the rain stopped, it had been a tradition among the Indians that no rain had, since the appearance of man upon the earth, ever fallen on that desert. There was never known to have been any plant life there. Six thousand miles of ocean lie on one side of this great Peruvian desert and the other side is bounded by the mighty Andes whose western slopes of rock and sand are almost destitute of vegetation.

On the eastern slopes of this colossal range of mountains are immense forests and jungles and a vegetation of the rankest kind. Now, the Peruvian botanist say that the plants and flowers which appeared during, and for a day or two after the rain, are not found anywhere on the continent of South America, and that the seeds, wherever they came from, must have been in the desert sands for thousands of years. These deserts are full of latent life and the seeds, whenever they were deposited, seem to enjoy a kind of immortality, for wherever an irrigation system is opened in arid lands an unheard of vegetation follows spontaneously, indicating that the sands preserve the life of seeds indefinitely.

The necessity of storing up water against a time of prolonged drought has wrought peculiar forms of both animals and plants, and in time it strangely effects human beings who are constrained to live amid desert wastes. The leaves of all desert trees are small and thick, so that they expose as little surface as possible for evaporation in the dry air. The struggle for water is noticeable everywhere, but how some desert animals continue to exist miles and miles away from moisture or water, is a problem puzzling to all materialists and

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biologists. The African giraffe, it is said, can live for months without drinking, but in Chihuahua and Colorado deserts there are animals which, seemingly, exist altogether without water.

